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P. H. Melle

LIFE OF
PATRICK HUES MELL

BY HIS SON

P. H. MELL, JR

LOUISVILLE, KY.
BAPTIST BOOK CONCERN.

1895.

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RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
TO
THE BAPTISTS OF THE SOUTH
IN MEMORY
OF
DR. P. H. MELL,
WHO WAS FOR MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS
AN EARNEST DEFENDER OF
THEIR FAITH.



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PREFACE.

The work of compiling this biography has been one of peculiar pleasure to the writer. His own affection and veneration for his noble father have been greatly intensified by the close study of this admirable character.

There was a certain degree of hesitation in undertaking the work, and considerable embarrassment during its progress, for fear that the partiality of the son would overdraw the admirable traits of the father. Because of this embarrassment the author has, in many instances, simply incorporated documents and opinions from others without comment, feeling satisfied that this evidence would speak in sufficiently forcible language.

Dr. Mell was so often thrown into controversy with his brethren in discussing great questions of religious and secular importance that it has been difficult to avoid personal allusions. It is hoped these may not be misconstrued and open anew long buried unpleasant differences which time and circumstances have healed and reconciled.

Another difficulty in the way of the writer has been the proper selection of what should go into the book among so much that is interesting and valuable.

The life portrayed in these pages was varied and active. This man was distinguished as a preacher of the Gospel, an educator, an author and a parliamentarian, and much of interest could be written of him in each of these fields of labor.

This book is now given to the public with the hope that it may receive the approval of the friends and admirers of Dr. Mell. And perhaps some young man struggling with poverty, and endeavoring to rise in spite of adverse surroundings, may derive lasting encouragement from these pages; and be stimulated to follow the example of this noble Christian.

He died in the evening of his days and his last strength was given to his Father's work; like Paul, he could say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

P. H. MELL, JR.

CHAPTER I.

STRUGGLES AND TRIALS OF EARLY LIFE.

PATRICK HUES MELL was born July 19th, 1814, in Walthourville, Liberty county, Georgia. His father, Major Benjamin Mell, was raised at Laurel Hill, one mile from Midway Church; and his mother, Cynthia Sumner Mell, was the granddaughter of Edward Sumner, who moved from South Carolina to Liberty county with the early settlers of that portion of Georgia. Cynthia Sumner was married to Major Benjamin Mell on the 19th of February, 1807, and by this union were born four sons and four daughters. P. H. Mell was the second in age, and the eldest son.

Major Mell, upon the death of his father, succeeded to a large and valuable property that enabled him to supply his family with many of the comforts of life. He was a very liberal man, sympathetic by nature, and generous to a fault. This disposition induced him to stand security in an evil hour for one who commanded his sympathy. The sum involved was a large one, and the party failing to meet the obligations when the note fell due, Major Mell was compelled to

pay the security, and his property was so much involved that he was unable to extricate himself. The greater part of his estate was swept away and his family was placed in straitened circumstances. This financial reversal produced such an effect upon his mind that his health gave way and within two years he died. His wife followed him two or three years later. P. H. Mell, being the eldest son, the support and care of the family fell upon his shoulders. When his father died he was only fourteen years of age, and but sixteen or seventeen at the time of his mother's death. He was thus deprived of his greatest source of comfort and strength. A mere youth without experience, he was forced to rely solely upon his native genius to provide a means of support for himself and dependent brothers and sisters. He gave up the small remnant of his share of the property, saved by his father from the wreck, to the support of his brothers and sisters, and started out with the determination to obtain an education, and as far as possible recover the social position and property that had been lost by his father's misfortune. During the life of his parents he was given the advantages of good schooling and a thorough foundation was laid upon which to build the excellent education that in after years he successfully acquired. With this preparatory

training to start with, at seventeen years of age he taught, for a time, a primary school in a log hut with a dirt floor and thus secured the funds required to supply the absolute necessities of life, and was enabled also to add a small sum to the income for the benefit of his brothers and sisters. In Walthourville, his native place, there was an excellent English and Classical Academy in which he soon obtained entrance as a scholar where he paid for his instruction by teaching some of the primary classes. Among his school-mates in boyhood was Dr. John Jones, the eminent Presbyterian minister. Dr. Jones, in writing to a friend since Dr. Mell's death, and speaking of this early time, says:

"His becoming a Baptist minister may be attributed to the fact that a few members of old Midway church, (the Sumners among them,) joined a Baptist church which was organized at Sunbury, Liberty county, Georgia, in the early part of this century. My impression is that Dr. Mell's father was not a church member.* His mother was a woman of marked individuality of character, intellectual and a truly Godly woman, brought up in the strictest mode of old Congregationalism, and, no doubt, perfectly familiar with the Westminster Shorter Catechism, which was thoroughly taught in old Midway church in ancient and in modern times. Dr. Mell was all Sumner, a perfect reproduction of his mother, in form, in features, in character and in mind, proving the old saying: 'that men of mark are chiefly indebted to their mothers for

* It is true, as Dr. Jones states, that Major Mell was not a member of the church, but he professed conversion and was a regular attendant on divine services of the Baptist church at Sunbury. I suppose his ancestors were members of the Episcopal Denomination because his father descended from the English Cavalier stock.

their superiority.' Dr. Mell manifested in early life an unusual love for knowledge, with great ability in acquiring all the branches of learning. But the distinguishing characteristic of the man was self reliance, autonomy; he was ever brave and hopeful, I never saw him depressed, although surrounded in early life by great domestic pressure caused by financial losses and changed circumstances. Dr. Mell was indeed a remarkable man."

In conversation with Dr. Jones he said that Mell was a leader among the school boys; and although of slender frame he was vigorous, active and high spirited, and ever ready and prompt not only to resent an insult to himself but also to defend his friends, especially those who were weaker than the oppressor. He had a strong sense of justice and was frequently the referee for school boy differences. Besides this his intelligence, vivacity and ready wit made him a most agreeable companion. When he made a promise he fulfilled it; he was true to his friends, and his integrity won the love and confidence of his schoolmates.

After remaining at the Walthourville school for a short time, P. H. Mell was offered a good position in the Academy at the Ridge near Darien. This Academy was under the direction of Col. Bradwell, and Mr. Mell continued his studies under him and paid for the tuition by acting as Assistant in the school.

Before his mother's death, and while attending school at the "Sand Hills," he received the fol-

lowing letter from her which shows so clearly how anxious she was that her son should grow up in the fear of the Lord and give his entire life to the Master's service.

'October 13th, 1829.

MY DEAR BOY:—

It is high time that you and I should communicate frequently and intimately and confidentially. If this is not to be expected by the time you have arrived at fifteen when is it to be looked for? On one account I have more anxiety, and even dread on your behalf than for any of my children. Earnestly as I wish a son of mine to be a minister yet I tremble at the idea of educating and devoting a son to the sacred profession without previously satisfactory evidence that his own soul was right with God.....My heart burns *to see you* in every sense of the word a true Christian. You cannot oblige me more than by giving me the history of your heart at different times. I have known too little of you, my child. Let that ignorance on my part cease. I have loved you from your birth, and have watched over you until now with the tenderest affection, but feel my own deficiency in not communing more with you on the state of your mind. You should exercise a jealousy over yourself lest the trifles of this world should deaden your feelings about the grand question: what are the chances of my salvation—what have I done—what must I do to be saved? Important questions. Other studies are very commendable and right, but let those which tend directly to religious subjects have the first place in your thoughts and affections.....Let these pages, my dear boy, be a testimony before God, and keep them as a sign between you and me, that I am in earnest as to a subject where indifference would be sin. I have long been studying your character in respect to your common life and particularly in reference to this point: remember they that are Christ's have crucified their affections and lusts—*crucify your's*.

Pursue your studies with diligence. You may do great things for yourself, even without help—although I grant much better with it..... Believe me to be ever your affectionate

MOTHER CYNTHIA MELL."

Mrs. Mell's mind seemed to be so full of the desire that her son should not only give himself to God but also become a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, that she wrote him again on the following day to the one on which the above letter was written and presented the question to him in this manner:

"You have arrived at an age when I wish you to become my bosom friend and companion in all things, but above all, in those things which belong to your everlasting peace. I have sometimes feared that other subjects have occupied your thoughts, and yet I have the firmest hope that your mind is truly sensible of the value and importance of divine things. I cannot but hope that you sometimes lift up your heart in prayer, and that your affections are somewhat directed towards divine truth. I cannot express to you how much the belief comforts and strengthens my mind. None but God knows what my feeling has been on that point. It must ever be kept in mind that the mere study of the ministry, however valuable in the individual, will not suffice, but consecration to God must be had before he or another for him fixes on the ministry for his profession. And I shall not hesitate to say to you that honored and happy as I should feel in being permitted to see you a faithful preacher of righteousness, adorning the gospel which you would proclaim to others, yet without this I would rather a thousand times see you in the humblest station in life. I will not conceal from you any longer my anxiety for you to become a minister, yet I dare not decide on such a plan without

much more clear evidence than I have yet seen, that your actual state, feeling and conduct, temper and conversation, habitual and fixed thoughts, are such as will justify me in doing so. I say this with anxiety, and write with fear, but I say it with earnest prayers for the real conversion of your soul to God, and with some hope that he will hear the petition that I have endeavored to offer up for you for many years back. I will repeat: I can never consent for you to study for the ministry until I have some satisfactory proof of your heart being turned to God in holy consistency and permanency of character."

The anxiety and love so strongly shown in these letters go to prove how potent are the prayers, the earnest solicitations and Christian influence of a mother's life over the future well-being and good fortunes of a loved son. The mother did not live to see the fruits of her work on the young life, but the long years of usefulness vouchsafed Dr. Mell and these years too so closely crowded with interesting incidents, show how great was the harvest that came from the seed his mother so carefully planted in the rich soil. God answered her prayers by giving to the country a noble life, the influence of which was felt for more than fifty years through the length and breadth of this Southern land.

In 1832, three years after the dates of the above letters, Mr. Mell was baptized at North New Port Baptist Church, in Liberty County, by the pastor, Rev. Josiah Samuel Law.

CHAPTER II.

COLLEGE DAYS.

The young man's earnest struggles for an education and the display of his indomitable energy, attracted the attention of a wealthy gentleman, Hon. Geo. W. Walthour, who lived in the same town. He offered to pay the expenses of a collegiate course and Mr. Mell readily accepted the kind assistance. This was in 1833. Amherst College, in Massachusetts, was selected by P. H. Mell because the expenses there were less than at any other college of equal grade. He was anxious to incur as little outlay as possible because he had the hope that he would be able to return the money so kindly loaned him by Mr. Walthour. At the opening of this Institution, in the fall of 1833, P. H. Mell entered the freshman class when he was nineteen years of age. In order to reduce the draft made on his friend as much as possible, he would teach during the vacation and six weeks into the term and would keep up with his class by studying the topics pursued and then stand an examination on his return to college. He was a very spirited young man, with a keen

sense of independence, and was unwilling to receive any more money from his benefactor in Georgia than was absolutely necessary for his immediate wants. The determination was early formed that the sums thus generously advanced to him should be returned as soon after leaving college as he could make the money.

The following incidents occurred while Mr. Mell was a student at Amherst. They are given in this connection to show the keen sense of his own rights and the high spirit and independence that were so characteristic of the man during his whole lifetime.

Not long after entering he was walking on the streets of the town with some of the boys, when they noticed a large negro approaching them with a swaggering, self-important gait. This negro was the bully of the town; most of the students seemed to be afraid of him and he fully recognized his supremacy. He was accustomed to see the boys give him the sidewalk whenever they met. Young Mell was not cognizant of this state of affairs; and living at the South, he was raised to believe that the negro was of an inferior race, and must always show the white man the respect due him on account of his superior station. So that when this burly fellow approached them on the streets of Amherst Mr. Mell expected nothing else but that the sidewalk would be yielded to the white boys. The

young Southerner was all the more amazed and indignant when the impudent negro, not only refused to give the right of way, but brushed against him and spun him around. This indignity so roused his anger that he impetuously sprang on the negro and gave him a violent blow between the eyes before he had time to collect himself. Blow after blow followed upon head and eyes until the man was brought to his knees. Young Mell then placing his hand in his pocket as though he would draw a pistol, said: "Now, you black rascal, hereafter whenever you pass me if you do not give me the right of way you will rue it. Now leave or I will do you bodily harm." The negro, ever after was polite and humble whenever he met Mr. Mell. As soon as the encounter occurred the other boys took to their heels and left Mell to fight it out by himself.

Prof. Fiske was the Professor of Physics in the college and he was entrusted with the money that Mr. Walthour gave Mr. Mell for his expenses. This gentleman was also a minister, and while preaching one Sunday to the students, he took occasion to say some things concerning slavery that were very obnoxious to the Southern young men who were in his audience. Mr. Mell turned to one of his companions and said he would not remain any longer to be insulted, and immediately rose and walked out of the

room. The next day the young man was sent for by the Professor and was asked why he left during the services; the reply came promptly: "Whenever any indignity was cast upon Southern institutions the Professor must not expect Southern young men to stand by quietly and give their endorsement thereto." This offended the Professor very much and he reproved Mr. Mell for what he was pleased to call his disorderly conduct.

A lecturer from South Carolina came to Amherst and advertised that he would lecture on some theme of popular interest. Some of the Southern youths, among them Mr. Mell, called on him and took him under their special care and entertained him while he remained in the town. The first night the house was well filled and the lecture was greatly enjoyed by all. On the second evening, however, the lecturer took occasion to allude to some subject that was specially obnoxious to the audience; this infuriated the people and the speaker was silenced by hisses and rotten eggs. Mr. Mell, with some of his Southern friends, occupied seats on the stage. The offensive utterances of the speaker, they very much regretted and condemned, but they thought it would be unmanly to desert him now and leave him to the rough treatment of some of the ill disposed in his audience. The people left the hall in confusion. A mob gath-

ered at the door to take the man in hand when he should leave the house. Although the students were very much ashamed of their protégé yet they felt honor required them to stand by the lecturer through the trouble and as far as possible relieve the embarrassment. - After a hurried consultation the popular (?) lecturer was rushed out the back part of the building, and the students, with Mell at their head, placed themselves at the front door and at a given signal, threw themselves suddenly into the midst of the crowd, yelling and brandishing sticks and producing the utmost confusion. The boys were thus enabled to escape in the darkness from the struggling mass of people. The Faculty learning of the disturbance wrote to the parents and guardians of the boys and advised them of the unruly conduct of their wards. Col. Walthour, in a strong letter to young Mell, reprimanded him severely and threatened to withdraw his support if he did not reform. This gentleman would not listen to an explanation and thus roused the just indignation of the young man, who was the perfect soul of honor, and he resolved to decline all proffers of future assistance.

Several days after the above occurrence, Mr. Mell was walking down the college campus, and just as he passed a room in which the Freshman Class was holding a meeting, a young man of

the Sophomore Class threw open the door and cast a handful of pebbles on the heads of the inmates, doing some damage to the property. This boy then ran away leaving Mell very near the open door. The Freshmen rushed out and surrounded him and asked him if he did the deed. "Oh no," he replied. "Who did it then?" they asked. But he refused to tell, and the boys proposed to mob him and force him to tell who committed the outrage. But Mell quietly told them he was not responsible for the damage done and the first man who laid hands on him would suffer. He would not submit to any indignity from them without a desperate struggle. His determined air, and the reputation he had already made in the college as a cool-headed, dangerous man when aroused, made the boys hesitate. Some of the Southern boys of the Freshman Class cheered the intrepid young man and immediately stepped to his side with the statement that he was right in his position and they would stand by him. This manifestation put a quietus on the crowd and they permitted Mell to pass on his way unmolested. The Faculty soon learned of the trouble also and sent word to Mr. Mell to appear before them to answer to certain charges made against him for insubordination and disorderly conduct. When he came in their presence the President asked

him if he had committed the outrage on the young men.

"I did not," replied Mell.

"Do you know who was responsible for it."

"I do," replied the young man.

"Then who was it?" asked the President.

"I have too high a regard for honor to betray one of my fellow-students," replied Mr. Mell.

"I am sorry, however, that the damage was done, and I think the boy should be punished; but the gentlemen of the Faculty must excuse me from giving them information that will involve one of my comrades. I am perfectly innocent of this disturbance."

The President then responded: "You must tell us."

"Must is a strong word, Sir, but I do not see how you will enforce it."

"Well, young man, if you do not give the information sought for, you will be dismissed."

"You have that power, Sir, but the threat has not the slightest effect upon my determination," replied Mr. Mell, and he left the room.

He retired to his quarters and made his preparations to leave at any time because he supposed the Faculty would certainly dismiss him. But so far as he was concerned the matter was dropped. Professor Fiske wrote to Col. Walthour and complained that Mr. Mell was not only unruly but was spending too much money.

In the account he gave was one item of \$11.00 for travelling; while it was a fact that this money was used to defray the necessary expenses incurred in reaching his summer schools and thus aided him in paying his own way and reducing the draft on Col. Walthour. His patron wrote him again protesting against such extravagance, in spite of the statement given by the young man concerning the use made of the money. Mell then instantly broke off all communication with him, and going to Professor Fiske he said: "I suppose now, Sir, you are satisfied." Professor Fiske grew angry and threatened him. The young man at once left college without leave, with only \$5.00 in his pocket which he had obtained from the sale of his effects. His means being so limited he walked to Springfield, Mass., twenty miles distant, enquired for a school and found one in West Springfield, which was indicated to him by the hotel proprietor of the town. He went to the President of the Board of Trustees and asked for a position in the school, and stated that he was from the South; that he was a student in Amherst College, and had left without permission. He refused, however, to give the reasons except to say, that he had not committed any deed that the most honorable man would be ashamed of. He desired to make a living and would try to give satisfaction if they would assign him a position in the school. The

gentleman was so favorably impressed by his open, manly bearing and earnest determination to make his way in the world that he told him there was a vacancy in the school and he should have it. This occurred in 1835.

Mr. Mell spent one year in this Institution; then yielding to solicitations he became Associate Principal of the High School at East Hartford, Connecticut, in 1836. There he continued also one year. While in this town he met Col. McAllister, a wealthy gentleman of Savannah, Georgia, who was accustomed to spend a part of each year with his family in Hartford where he owned a dwelling. This gentleman was a most intimate friend of Major Benjamin Mell. Learning that the son of his friend was in the town teaching, he sent for him and soon learned all about his troubles and struggles against almost insurmountable obstacles. He became very much interested in the young man and offered to send him to Yale College and pay all his expenses. But the recent experience at Amherst had convinced Mr. Mell that it was not wise to be under any more obligations in a pecuniary way and he declined the kind offer. Mr. McAllister insisted, but it was of no avail. He, however, befriended the young man in so many ways, and exhibited such a deep, personal interest in his welfare, that an indelible impression was made on the youth's mind, and the

kindness was gratefully remembered through all the many years Dr. Mell lived. Declining an offer from the leading public school in Hartford, Conn., he returned to his home in Georgia in the latter part of 1837.

Dr. B. M. Palmer, of New Orleans, the eminent Presbyterian Divine, was in college with Mr. Mell at Amherst. He also left college before graduating and for several years taught a school in Charleston, S. C. While in that city he wrote to Mr. Mell a letter from which the following extracts have been taken. The letter was dated December 11th, 1835, and was written while Mr. Mell was in West Springfield.

“DEAR MELL:

There was a tinge of melancholy pervading your letter and enveloping your naturally lovely strain in its sombre hues. Why, cheer up, man! 'Tis true your case looks dark and uninviting, but not so gloomy as to induce despair. I regret, Mell, I *truly* regret, your altercation with Fiske The public have invested the Faculty of every college with supreme authority, and any attempt to resist that authority is but kicking against the pricks And I do not wonder that you feel badly when this thought, this reflection forces itself upon you. But give me leave, my dear friend, without the imputation of flattery, which I detest, to express admiration at the course of conduct you have pursued. Believe me, Mell, as I read of your troubles and your conduct in them, I felt you were possessed of that true, ingenuous, disinterested spirit which Southerners boastingly claim. Does not the thought, let me ask, that you are free and *unshackled*, that you are dependent upon the bounty of *no one*, amply repay you for the toil, the care, the anxiety

which necessarily devolve upon you in your hard situation? Though the current may sometimes sweep strong against you, nay more, may sometimes apparently overwhelm you, still the thought that you *can* and *do* stem it, and that too unaided by others, will amply repay your toil."

CHAPTER III.

THE RETURN TO GEORGIA.

In West Springfield there was a family by the name of Williams with whom P. H. Mell boarded while he was teaching in that town. He became very much attached to the members of that family and often spoke of them in after years with affection. The gentleman, Mr. L. Williams, was particularly kind to the young man by taking him into his family and extending to him all the considerate feeling and affectionate attention characteristic of such a kind hearted man. On July the 16th, 1837, just before returning to his home in Georgia, Mr. Mell wrote the following letter to Mr. Williams, from Newbury Port, which shows his appreciation of the sympathy and friendship of these noble people:

“MY DEAR SIR:

I have just received your very kind letter and hasten to answer it before I leave. I start from this place for New York to-morrow. I am very much indebted to you for your characteristic offer to me to make your house my home. I can never cease to remember with the liveliest emotions the kind sympathy you and Mrs. Williams have ever exhibited to me, an outcast from friends. But I will not undertake to express myself, for I know I

cannot do justice to my feelings. The time I spent at your house I can never cease to remember, for it was the most gloomy and yet one of the happiest periods of my life—gloomy on account of the coolness, yea, injustice of my former friends—coolness the more cutting and oppressive from the consciousness on my part of its injustice—and the happiest from the unmingled kindness I received in a land of strangers—a kindness the more grateful to me from the consciousness that I had nothing to recommend me to it.

I do not anticipate any very great danger in going home now, particularly if I adopt the course I think of. I designed at first to sail from New York for Charleston and then cross by railroad into the northern part of the State to my uncle's plantation, where I will find air very similar to that I now breathe. But I am anxious to see my brothers and sisters and have, therefore, changed my determination and shall sail for Savannah, though I shall remain with them not more than a week. I think I had better not be throwing away my time in New England any longer when it is so difficult to obtain a lucrative position. My feelings are not at all changed in reference to the treatment I have received from the hands of my 'friends.' I go home, but I do so neither to solicit nor to accept any assistance from them. Nothing calls me there but a desire to see again my brothers and sisters. When that is accomplished I shall shape my course for my uncle's, who has given me an urgent invitation to do so. After which the world will be before me. It owes me a living and shall e'en give it me. This is what I used to say, but I wonder if it has not stopped payment too? I have been more than half induced to suspect that mother earth has followed the example of the banks. At least she protests all my drafts. I believe the world is a monster. I wish General Jackson, seeing he has nothing else to do, would look into it. One thing certain, I shall never trust any more to its '*promissory notes*.' It has been nothing but promise. Speaking of banks reminds

me of a situation I got into the other day which illustrated to me very clearly what a blessing our currency is to us. I got into a gig here with a friend, rode over to Haverhill, about fifteen miles from here. The day was pleasant, the scenery fine and the ride in every respect unexceptionable. We arrived at the bridge which crosses the Merrimac and, good honest souls, were congratulating ourselves upon its termination and our speedy enjoyment of the solid pleasures contained in the smoke of good Havanna cigars, when, horrible to relate, we could not possibly squeeze out money enough to pay our bridge toll. I offered him a \$3.00 bill on a Rhode Island bank, then others on commercial banks to the amount of \$70.00; not one would the good-for-nothing-fellow take. I said: 'Stranger, I have nine cents in full in change, you can have that and welcome, and I'll throw my jack-knife in to boot, or if that won't content you, I'll make all the atonement in my power by undoing what I've done. I'll turn my horse round and ride back over the bridge again, provided you let me do a little business in town first, for I wish by all means to satisfy you.' The dear fellow, (I know he was a Jackson man,) refused to take a cent, and grinning from ear to ear, (that is as near as his cheeks would allow,) told us we might pass.....

Your friend,

P. H. MELL."

This letter indicates to some extent the effect reverses had produced on the mind of the young man. Troubles and disappointments had crowded rapidly along his pathway, and it was natural that in the first part of his letter a strain of sadness, and an air of gloom should pervade it. But the latter part, with its thread of humor, shows what a buoyant spirit he had and how rapidly it reacted from under the clouds of ad-

versity. It is very evident that a man with such a character cannot be crushed. Adversity and disappointments seemed to give him renewed strength, and the severe schooling he was passing through, in this early stage of his life, was surely preparing him for the many hard fought battles of his later life.

When this letter was written, as has been already stated, he was on his way to his Southern home. After remaining in Walthourville, Ga., a short time, he succeeded in securing a school at Perry's Mill, in Tatnall County, Ga., and assumed charge of it the first of October, 1837.

In October, 1838, he accepted the school at Ryal's, in Montgomery County, Ga., where he taught until February 14th, 1839, when he received a letter from Dr. Few, President of Emory College, at Oxford, Ga., offering him the Principalship of a Female Seminary the citizens had decided to establish in that town. Mr. William H. Mell, an uncle living at Oxford, wrote to Mr. Mell urging him to accept. The position had been tendered him through the influence of Gov. Troup, who met young Mell at Dr. Perry's, in Montgomery County, and became interested in him and gave him the strongest recommendation to Dr. Few. For some unexplained reason the contemplated school was never established. The Board of Trustees of

Emory College, however, elected Mr. Mell to the position of principal of the "Oxford Classical and English School" which was a preparatory school for the college.

CHAPTER IV.

CALLED TO PREACH THE GOSPEL.

While living in Oxford, and on the 25th of February, 1839, he wrote to Rev. Josiah Samuel Law, pastor of the North Newport Baptist Church, in Liberty County, Ga., who baptized him before he left for Amherst. The letter shows how unsettled his mind had become under the strain of those years of toil and struggle against almost insurmountable obstacles. In reading the accounts of his early life it seems remarkable that his integrity and strength of character were able to withstand the great strain. Cast adrift among strangers, far from kindred and friends, with no money to meet the necessities of life, and with brothers and sisters in the far Southern home dependent on him alone for support, these experiences might have crushed natures even stronger than his. But a wise Providence was watching over his destiny and a merciful God had him in the hollow of his hand. Although he stumbled now and then and the waves swept over his head, still this letter shows that he was brought through in safety, and the prayers of his mother were

answered: "My heart burns to see you in every sense of the word a Christian." Parts of the epistle show a very desperate condition of mind at the time, but they represent a portion of the struggle through which Mr. Mell had to pass, and they make the after years of his life appear more glorious in comparison. As has been already stated, this letter is to me, a remarkable portrayal of character, and of God's dealings with one of whom much was required. I earnestly hope that its perusal, when taken in connection with the long and useful life of Dr. Mell may be the means of helping some who may pass through a similar experience, and enable them to force their way over opposing difficulties.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR:

You have no doubt been aware from your own observations, and from the testimony of others, notwithstanding you have received no confession from me of the fact, that I have been for some years past careless in regard to the interests of eternity, and a backslider from the faith I professed. When I gave up my hope I was absent from the state and did not inform you of it, as I thought (erroneously I have since been informed,) there were but two ways, according to the rules of the church, by which my connection with it could be dissolved—one, by a dismissal in regular standing, should I wish to connect myself with another body—and another by excommunication. And I supposed the latter to be administered only when the member violated any of the obvious rules of *morality*—or at least such as the church has instituted to regulate his *outward conduct*. My object in writing to you at present is to ascertain whether my name is

still on the church books so that I may be able to discover what my duty may be under the circumstances. Augustus Bacon, in a conversation I had with him some time since, remarked that you had informed him it had been taken off by my request; but I think it must be a mistake, as I made but one application and that was for permission to connect myself with the Amherst Baptist church, and as I heard nothing from you I concluded you had not received it. I shall be very much indebted to you for an immediate answer to this, and for instructions as to what course to pursue in order to renew my connection with the church.

The Lord has dealt mercifully with me and has been pleased to bring me from the most awful lengths of unbelief and to humiliate me at the foot of the cross. And I think I can say that I have the firmest belief relying humbly upon his promises that he has for Christ's sake pardoned all my sins. It is almost more than I can realize, and when I consider who I am and what I have been and how I have trifled with this subject I am filled with astonishment that I can by possibility arrive at such a state of mind as to believe that I have passed from death unto life. Perhaps it is my duty to narrate to you the history of my heart and the dealings of the Lord with me. And I hope you will look upon the following as proceeding from that feeling and not view it in the light of obtrusive egotism.

When I connected myself with the church I was entirely ignorant of the religion I was professing. This I say not to clear myself from the imputation of instability nor in any measure as an apology, but as an awful fact that I professed to believe in a God of whom I knew nothing. Living by faith in Christ, laying hold of his promises and trusting him for their fulfilment, though read often and heard oftener—astonishing as it may seem to you—and it cannot surprise you more than it does me now, I never attached any idea to as a part of the Gospel plan and instead of seeking the witness of the Spirit of God which

might bear witness with my spirit that I was born again, I looked to my own animal feelings for the proof of my acceptability with God—feelings which a pathetic story, theatrical representations, and harmony of sound have often since produced. And I was assured that all was right if I could succeed in exciting those feelings on rising from my bed in the morning and on retiring at night, especially if I could have them accompanied by a few tears. This, Sir, was my religion. This was the sandy foundation on which I built, and it was not to be wondered at that the waves of the world, beating on my house should overthrow it. The comforts of religion were to me but a name. I sought God's face, not because I loved him but because I feared him. I looked upon him not as one who could smile upon me and bless me too, but as an angry God who would punish me for my sins. I renounced the world not because I saw its vanity compared with the things of eternity, but because I felt myself compelled to from motives of safety; and I am bound to believe—though it was what I could not consent to confess to myself at the time—that if I had only been assured that I had nothing to fear from God's righteous indignation I should never have renounced them and connected myself with his people. Such was my religious state when I left home for college. And now I was placed in the midst of new scenes and new associates—my attention and interest became absorbed by other subjects. God and the things of eternity became less and less interesting to me—my efforts to create a good state of feeling became less and less strenuous with frequent intermissions. From indifference for my soul's salvation, I glided by an imperceptible current to a distaste for the subject—to a downright dislike for it and finally openly and joyfully threw off the restraints that my religion had imposed upon me and buried myself in the world. The failure to obtain that change of heart which the Bible spoke of induced me to question its reality and to believe at first that it had its existence only in the heated imagination of enthusiasts,

and then that it was a cunningly devised fable invented by priest-craft to gull the simple and perpetuate its power. And thus the Bible came to be viewed as an imposture and God's people as deluders and deluded, and it only remained for me to consummate my unbelief by doubting the existence of a God—Yes, with my eyes upturned to the heavens, which declare his glory, and open upon the beautiful material world around me, which showeth his handy work, I said in my heart, and rejoiced that I could say it: There is no God. But my merciful Heavenly Father has forgiven me that sin.

When I think of the awful depths of unbelief to which I had struggled, I am filled with amazement at the long suffering and mercy of God in that he did not suddenly cut me off or give me over to hardness of heart and blindness of mind to believe a lie. And now my whole heart became absorbed in the things of this world. God and religion were not thought of except to be blasphemed and sneered at—not openly; for motives of prudence induced me to conceal my state that I might not shock the minds of men and thus throw a barrier in the way of my temporal prospects. Ambition now took entire possession of my soul, a desire to rise above my fellows in mental stature—not so much that I might be able to do more good, as that I might be a mark for all to gaze at. This, a desire to become great in the world, had been a *principle* with me from my earliest recollection, though I had the good sense to conceal it from my acquaintances generally, and often when I was a poor boy destitute of even the necessities of life would I delight myself picturing in my imagination scenes of future grandeur and triumph in which I would be the actor. These were but dreams it is true, but dreams that expelled from my thoughts every thing that did not administer to them. And at the time I am speaking of my mind had become so spiritually darkened that could I have accomplished fame by it I verily believe I would have been willing to renounce without the slightest sinking of the heart thenceforth and forever

all interest in the atonement of Christ whose very existence I doubted. Such was my state when a little more than a year ago I returned home.

But I have extended this already to an unbecoming length. It only remains for me to relate as briefly as possible the means by which my thoughts were again diverted to the things of eternity.—And here I have no signal interposition to relate, no *occurrence* to point out as having been instrumental in rousing me to a sense of my awful condition. But it pleased God that I should be placed in a situation where I could be frequently alone: where, by influences of his Holy Spirit he might turn my thoughts inward and the still small voice of conscience might be heard. The world, too, previous to this, had begun to assume rather a different aspect in my eye. Circumstances had happened which affected me, alone it is true, and which had made a deep impression on me. Experience had shown me that the affections of friends even who wished me well, could easily be alienated, and that from the world I was just as likely to receive censure for that which deserved commendation as the contrary. During my absence from Georgia, all the time not devoted to the discharge of my duties had been spent in amusements or in company of which I possessed an unlimited command, and thus thoughts on religion had no opportunity of intruding themselves upon me. But after my return I engaged in business very much at the time against my own consent, in a part of the country that is very thinly settled, where there was not a single young person of my own age with whom I could associate; added to this was the fact that I was not in a situation to occupy my vacation time with books. So that certain hours every day I was left alone with myself. During these periods God was pleased to be near me and to induce such a train of thought as to show me the vanity of earthly things, and the weighty importance of things of eternity. The objections I had cherished against the existence of a God and the authenticity of the Scriptures, now that I

had an opportunity of thinking calmly and without interruption, lost their weight. The more particularly so as I had no opportunity of noting the inconsistencies of professing Christians, and seldom heard the gospel preached. In this part of my experience there is nothing standing out distinct to which I can refer as the cause of any result which followed. I commenced teaching school in that place confessedly with the belief that the Bible was all a fable and even if true that it was never more to receive attention from me. And by steps that were imperceptible to me at the time and cannot be traced now I was brought to relinquish all my doubts and to *feel* that even for me the subject had an interest. But notwithstanding, for more than a year did I trifle with this subject. There was this doubt I had to solve, this mystery I had to look into, and I tried to satisfy myself with saying that Religion was a subject I could not understand. Then perhaps yielding to the influence of the moment I would retire to a private place and try to pray, and because I did not receive a miraculous manifestation of God's presence in my heart I would give up in despair and perhaps the next moment with a zest which would astonish myself, would join with the thoughtless in throwing ridicule on the Bible and Religion.

But not to multiply words. In this awful state did I continue until about three weeks ago when God was pleased to bring me like a little child to the foot of the cross, and I was led to pray him to save me in his own way. I know I am weak and unable to persevere if I depend upon myself; but Christ is strong and he has told me in his word, his grace will be sufficient for me. Let me beg an interest in your prayers, as I have no doubt I have already had. Pray for me that I may not again deceive myself but that I may build on the rock Christ Jesus. Excuse the length of this communication, I could not well have written shorter. I hope you will not view it as gratuitous. I have written it because I was not sure that it was not my duty, and I did not know but that the

church would require some such statement before they would consent to readmit me into fellowship with them.

With sentiments of respect,

I remain yours respectfully,

P. H. MELL."

The portions of the above letter that refer to his ambitious aspirations are most pathetic. He had a great fondness for the profession of law and was struggling between his preference for the law and the impression that he was called to the ministry. A few years ago, while commenting on this period of his life, he informed the writer that he felt convinced the peculiar condition of his mind portrayed in the above letter could be attributed to nothing more evident than his effort to overcome the strong inclination to preach the gospel.

The Rev. Josiah Law replied as follows to the letter from young Mell:

"SUNBURY, GA., March 27th, 1839.

MY DEAR BROTHER:

It is with joy that I address you by the above endearing appellation which bespeaks relationship more sacred and binding than any other.

Your interesting and heart gladdening letter should have been answered before this but I wished to present it to the church before replying to it. I accordingly, at the first meeting after its reception read it to the church and I assure you there was not one whose heart was not filled with joy and thanksgiving to God at your return to the fold of Christ. It was unanimously voted that you be restored to full fellowship of the church. You are now one of us—once more in the bosom of the church—once

more known as a professed follower of the meek and lowly Jesus. May your motto from hence forth to the end of your days be: 'For me to live is Christ's.' From the sketch you have given of your religious experience I must say you are a monument of God's mercy and forbearance, one among the many trophies of His rich abounding grace. How should the remembrance of the 'horrible pit and miry clay,' from which your feet have been taken, fill your heart with gratitude to God and stimulate you to faithful and untiring perseverance in the divine life. . . .

Your brother in the bonds of Christ,

J. S. LAW."

The restoration to full membership in the church at Sunbury produced a wholesome effect on the mind of the young man, and the constantly increasing tendency to preach seems to have taken such firm hold of his inclinations that he sacrificed all ambitious desires to enter the practice of law and at last gave his full consent to submit to the moulding power of his Master and devote himself to the ministry. The following extracts taken from letters written to J. S. Law in 1839 show this decided change in the character and life of P. H. Mell. The struggle had been a long and bitter one but the surrender came at last and it was a complete one because he proposed to enter upon the work with no half-hearted interest, but, as was shown in all his after life, he intended to give the entire energies of his nature to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"There is a subject which has long occupied my thoughts and I desire to obtain your advice. I have been impressed for some time with the conviction that it is my duty to preach the gospel, though I tremble when I think of it lest my own presumptuous vanity should have suggested it to me. I know the responsibilities are awfully great, and I have been silent until this time because I have been afraid I was too much disposed to run heedlessly and thoughtlessly into them. But my firm conviction is that I must preach the gospel and I can resist it no longer. I know I am not fit for the office; but the preparation of the heart is with God and he can qualify me for it. It remains for you and the church to say what I shall do. I am not unmindful of the fact that my distance from them and the consequent ignorance of the church in reference to my religious state, as indicated by my daily walk, may be an obstruction in the way of their giving me the license. In that case, if they think I am influenced by the Spirit of God in this matter it would be well for them to give me a letter of dismission to the church here; and anyhow I would be glad to get one of recommendation. There are very few Baptist preachers in this part of the country, and there are a great many destitute places in reach of me where I could, by attending on the Sabbath, be instrumental of good, if I be indeed called of God. In writing the above I have done that which I have long been impressed it was my duty to do, and I now leave the matter with you and the church, firmly trusting that the Lord will direct you in the case."

Mr. Mell felt the importance of a thorough education to every man who expected to sustain a prominent position of usefulness among his fellow-creatures, and he bent every energy to acquire a mind well stored with knowledge. He could not be satisfied with an ordinary educa-

tion, and, when he became convinced that he was called to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, he felt the more need of profound learning in things relating to religious and secular affairs. He was very much embarrassed the first part of his life for want of the necessary means to meet the absolute demands made upon him. But God was guiding him towards the ministry and He was providing the material for the upbuilding of a great, good man and a preacher of marvelous power.

“I fully concur with you in the advantages, indeed the necessity, of an educated ministry. . . . If it were possible I would gladly avail myself of the advantages of a theological course, but providential circumstances oppose insuperable obstacles. The destitute situation of my sisters imperiously demands that I should be engaged in some lucrative business so that I may be enabled to contribute towards the supply of their wants. I can form some idea of the qualifications necessary in a faithful pastor, and if I am called into the work of the ministry I shall leave no means untried which will have a tendency to make me an efficient instrument in the hands of God; but whatever I do I shall have to do unaided. As far as I can now see I shall have to teach for two or three years yet, and my application had this extent. I saw that this part of the country was very deficient in laborers of the Baptist Denomination, though its membership is very numerous, and that if I had the right to do so, I could probably be instrumental of good by attending some of the destitute places on the Sabbath and repeating the story of the cross. I have become firmly established in the belief that I must preach the gospel, and I am compelled to say with

the Apostle, 'Woe is me if I do not.' God has shown me how vain are all things here below, and henceforth I glory in nothing save the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world. And I thank God I can say His will be done. Should He call me to leave kindred and friends and all I hold dear on earth and carry the glad tidings of salvation to the inhabitants of the Polar snows or Torrid regions, to the people of the Celestial Empire or the degraded negroes of Caffraria, I would obey with alacrity and thank God that He had counted me worthy."

In response to this letter the following license was issued to him by the North Newport church, Liberty county, Georgia:

"SUNBURY, October 23, 1839.

LIBERTY COUNTY, }
GEORGIA. }

This is to certify that Mr. Patrick Mell, having applied to the North Newport church of the above county, of which he is a member in good standing, for license to preach the gospel, the church, believing that he possesses the moral and intellectual qualifications requisite for so doing, do cheerfully grant to him the liberty of preaching the gospel, and they ask for him the Christian fellowship of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ among whom he may come.

Done by order of the church.

JOSIAH S. LAW, Pastor."

P. H. Mell began preaching in the neighborhood of Oxford, Georgia, in the spring of 1840, under the license given him by the North Newport church. His engagements at the college

were met during the week days and on the Sabbath he visited the destitute places and preached to the people the message of salvation. He was not, however, an ordained minister at this time and did not have regular charge of a church.

CHAPTER V.

MARRIAGE.—ELECTION TO PROFESSORSHIP IN
MERCER UNIVERSITY.—ORDINATION.

On the 29th of June, 1840, Mr. Mell was married to Lurene Howard Cooper, daughter of George Cooper, a resident of Montgomery county, Georgia. Miss Cooper attended Mr. Mell's school at Ryal's, where he first became acquainted with her. This acquaintance soon ripened into strong affection, and this companionship of his young manhood's days lived for twenty years as his most devoted wife, who deeply sympathized with him in all the adversities and successes that lined his pathway, and who was able to intelligently aid him in all his plans for the future, because she was blessed with a mind filled with fertile resources, well stored with useful knowledge. This union was blessed with eight children, four sons and four daughters, five of whom are now living.

The chair of Ancient Languages in Mercer University, at Penfield, Georgia, becoming vacant, P. H. Mell was strongly endorsed by his friend, Ex-Gov. George M. Troup, before the

Board of Trustees, and on the 17th of February, 1841, he was elected to fill the position. He entered at once upon the discharge of his duties in this University. As soon as he became settled in Penfield he removed his membership from the church at North Newport to the Baptist church in his new home; this occurred on the 2d of April, 1842. He did not stop preaching but each Sabbath he visited some destitute place in the neighborhood that was too poor to secure the services of a regularly ordained minister. His work was largely gratuitous and the proclamation of the glad tidings of salvation to lost sinners was so greatly blessed by his Master that the attention of the Greensboro church was called to him, and in October, 1842, they requested the brethren at Penfield to ordain P. H. Mell for the ministry in order that he might accept the pastorate of the Greensboro church. In response to this request the brethren at Penfield met in conference October 29th, 1842, and the following minute was recorded:

“Moved and carried that the request of the Greensboro church to put Brother Mell forward for ordination be agreed to; and that Saturday before the third Sunday in November be the day; and that the candidate and Pastor elect the Presbytery. The Brethren Brooks, Stokes, Harris and the Pastor were named. Directed the Clerk to give written notice to the Presbytery.”

“PENFIELD, November 19th, 1842.

At the call of the church for a Presbytery to ordain Brother P. H. Mell, our Pastor, Brother B. M. Sanders, with Brethren Otis Smith and Wm. H. Stokes, attended. Brother Stokes preached from II. Tim. 4:2—‘Preach the Word.’ Brother Sanders examined the church and the candidate; Brother Smith made the ordaining prayer, with the imposition of hands, by all the Presbytery. Brother Sanders gave the charge and Brother Smith gave the right hand of fellowship, and the benediction was pronounced by Brother Mell.

B. M. SANDERS, Moderator.”

“PENFIELD, November 19th, 1842.

To all whom it may concern, greeting:

We, the undersigned ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, of the Baptist Denomination, at the request of the church at Penfield, and with their concurrence and co-operation, having duly examined Brother P. H. Mell, one of their members, in reference to his call and qualification for the Gospel ministry, and being fully satisfied in relation thereto, have with one accord, by prayer and the imposition of hands, set him forth to the full discharge of the duties of the Christian ministry, and do hereby recommend him to the confidence and fellowship of the ministry and the churches.

Given under our hands:

B. M. SANDERS.

W. H. STOKES.

OTIS SMITH.”

Rev. P. H. Mell accepted the call to the pastorate of the Greensboro church and entered at once upon the work. He served this church faithfully until 1852, when he became pastor of the Antioch church, as is stated further on in this biography.

In 1844 Dr. John L. Dagg was elected President of Mercer University to succeed Rev. Otis Smith who had served since 1840. From this date a friendship was established between Dr. Dagg and Prof. Mell which was not severed even during the long years of their lives. Dr. Dagg did not enjoy vigorous health and he found it quite difficult to attend to the discipline of the Institution for want of the necessary strength demanded by the duties. Professor Mell therefore offered to relieve him of these duties whenever his services would be useful to the President. His youth, health and vigorous body enabled him to fill the position of disciplinarian with marked success. Many of the mischievous boys came to grief because of the vigilance of the young Professor; and from this frequent contact with the students many amusing and sometimes serious adventures were experienced by him. He soon received from the students the appellation of "Old Pat," and it was said by them that his presence pervaded the entire town of Penfield, where the University was located. On account of his excellent knowledge of boys and keen appreciation of their propensities he became cognizant of many of their pranks before they were performed and this fact made the students fear him very much. At the same time they greatly respected and admired his wonderful power. Their experience taught them he was

just and merciful in treating every case that came under his control. Some of the strongest friends and bitterest enemies that he made during his life were college boys who were under him at this time.

The following are some of the incidents related of him while he was connected with the University:

During a dark night he was called out by the continued noise of the students on the streets. The parties who were creating the disturbance had threatened to injure him that night because he had so often exposed their mischief and brought the condemnation of the college authorities upon them. Some of them had prepared sticks with loaded heads to use on him when he should expose himself to their anger. They were drinking also and were in an unusually boisterous condition. Prof. Mell walked the streets some time before he was able to get in the group of young men and detect their faces. But at last he succeeded, and after finding out who they were, announced his name, ordered them to return to their rooms and in the morning to report to the President's office. Turning on his heels to walk off, one of the party gave him a severe blow on the head with a loaded stick; fortunately the dark night made the aim uncertain and the heavy felt hat which he had hurriedly thrown on his head as he was leaving

his home, acted as a protection, and the stick glanced to his shoulder, only slightly bruising his scalp, but paralyzing his arm. Although the pain was intense he had the presence of mind to turn quickly and recognize the boy who committed the deed. Returning to his home he was confined to his room for a number of days. The boy who made this violent attack upon his Professor, becoming sober next morning and fully realizing what he had done, left college without waiting to be dismissed. The others were all brought up before the authorities, charged with drunkenness and disorderly conduct, and were expelled from the Institution.

On another occasion while the air was moist and a heavy fog hung over the little village of Penfield, Professor Mell's attention was attracted by pistol firing and great disturbances on the main street of the town, and he immediately went out to put a stop to the noise. Threats had been made by several young men for a month past that they would take his life before they left college. But no attention was paid to these threats by Prof. Mell, because he did not believe they would be carried out. Near the Ciceronian Society Hall, on the night mentioned, he came upon the young men, three or four in the party, and accused them of creating the disturbance, when one of the boys pointed a pistol at the Professor's breast and snapped it

several times, but the rain had dampened the charge and it refused to fire. The boys then took to their heels, but not before they were fully identified. They went to their rooms in the college building and one was heard to brag that he had snapped his pistol at "Old Pat" three times, and that if he had not been interrupted he would have continued to snap until it had fired for he was determined to kill "Old Pat." The faculty expelled these rioters from college and Prof. Mell had them presented to the grand jury for assault with intent to murder. One of them fled the country and the law was unable to place its hands on him. The others were indicted, and the case was going hard with them, when, through sympathy for their parents, who were excellent people, Prof. Mell withdrew the prosecution and the young men were allowed to go free without further punishment. Judge J. H. Lumpkin pleaded in their behalf and his appeals induced Prof. Mell to withdraw the case from court. In reply to Judge Lumpkin he wrote as follows:

"I appreciate your disinterestedness in the endeavor you make to settle the case without bringing it before a jury, and I am willing to do all in my power to aid you in the attempt to save the reputations of the young men, and the feelings of their parents. I should be much pleased to stop proceedings could a way be pointed out to me by which it could be done with safety. Though I am constrained to confess the difficulties in the way are so

great that I see not how I can do so without causing greater evil.

I commenced the prosecution in the first place not to gratify any personal resentment, but from, I think, a sense of duty to the public and the students of the college. Such outrages had become common to an alarming extent in our colleges, and several valuable officers had lost their lives. It seemed to me at the time, and subsequent reflection has not changed my conviction, that the duty which I owed not only to all literary institutions, but to parents who had sons to educate, required me to establish the principle that students cannot with impunity draw deadly weapons upon college officers."

The two instances mentioned show how prompt Prof. Mell was to detect the mischief of the students at Mercer and how quickly they were brought to punishment if he felt they deserved it and the interest of the Institution demanded it. Yet at the same time he was not unmerciful, but often dismissed the offender to his room without reporting him to the authorities, if he saw by the repentance of the boy that the demands of discipline had been subserved. A number of instances might be given to prove this point but it is unnecessary to recite them here. It must not be forgotten in talking of this period that the students who attended college in those days were often more inclined to violate rules and discipline than are the students at the present time. Although Prof. Mell made some boys fear him, because of his success in finding out their mischief, still to-day there are

many men scattered over the country who were students at Mercer during his connection with the Institution, and remember him with the warmest admiration and the most lasting friendship. He was the boy's friend and protected him in all his rights.

CHAPTER VI.

PASTORAL WORK.

In 1848 he accepted the pastorate of the Bairdstown church located in Greene county, Georgia; and in 1852 he was also elected to take charge of the church at Antioch, in Oglethorpe county. Finding that these two churches would occupy all of his time he was compelled to resign his pastorate at Greensboro, where he had served continuously for ten years. The brethren at Greensboro, after accepting P. H. Mell's resignation passed the following resolution:

"GREENSBORO, GA., June 12th, 1852.

Whereas our beloved pastor, P. H. Mell, has given us notice that at the end of the present year his pastoral care of this church would cease.

Resolved 1—That as a church we deeply regret Brother Mell should have considered it his duty to dissolve the connection so harmoniously existing for the past ten years as pastor and people. We unanimously express to our brother undiminished confidence in his ability, piety and discretion as a faithful minister of the gospel. In these relations he has discharged his various duties to the entire satisfaction of the church. His pious and exemplary walk has endeared him to us; and we assure him he has our full confidence and Christian affection.

Resolved 2—That we cheerfully recommend our brother

as an able evangelical minister of the gospel, where his lot may be cast.

And be it further resolved that these resolutions be recorded in the church book and a copy furnished Brother Mell.

THOMAS STOCKS, Church Clerk."

Mr. C. J. Landrum, a member of the Antioch church, in a letter in the hands of the writer, speaking of Rev. P. H. Mell and his call to the pastorate at this church, gives the following incidents, that are interesting in this connection:

"My first acquaintance with Dr. Mell was when he accepted the pastorate of Antioch Church, in January, 1852, and which was continued until 1878—twenty-six years. The church, for months before he was called, had been disturbed by a very serious difficulty, which, from poor management, had grown from bad to worse. In a very short time it was settled and peace was restored. I was impressed at once that he was a peace maker in the fullest and best meaning of that term. He did not seek to harmonize discords by leaving some points of the case unnoticed; others merely smoothed over or covered to ferment and burst forth in all their fury; his plan was the best; every point in dispute met on its own merits and upon principle, by which an adjustment could be made, and peace and harmony secured upon a solid basis. This he did in the case to which I have referred, and in a few months thereafter we had one of the best meetings I have ever witnessed. It certainly was a revival among God's people. It continued for two weeks or longer. Almost every day there were persons to be baptized. On such occasions Dr. Mell would read some appropriate Scripture touching upon the ordinance and lecture from it. This was very entertaining and instructive to the large concourse of people. It stirred up the Pedobaptists,

however, and as a result he was called on to meet Rev. Wm. Parks at Centre Church (Methodist) in a discussion on Scriptural baptism."

When this discussion was completed the two churches at Antioch and Bairdstown requested Mr. Mell to publish the sermons in book form for permanent preservation. He consented, and "Mell on Baptism" was the result. This book had a wide circulation, and it was claimed by some to have been instrumental in changing several Pedobaptists to the faith and belief of the Baptists. Mr. Landrum says still further in reference to this period:

"He was, when called to the pastorate of the Antioch church, a stranger to nearly all his charge and the people generally. His genial manners, however, made the esteem and confidence of every one with whom he met an easy conquest, and very soon he was an ideal Christian gentleman in this community. His ever bright and cheerful manner was almost an antidote for the darkest sentiments of gloom and despondency. His tender words of sympathy have thrilled many sorrowing and bereaved hearts, and really comforted them in the midst of their sorrows. As to his ministerial ability and usefulness, the success with which his efforts were crowned are sufficient answers even to the most fastidious criticisms to which his ministry might be subjected. As a pastor, in my judgment, I have yet to meet his equal. My kind regard and respect for him in the past were occasions for the remark that I worshipped him, and that I thought I would go to him when I died. In our memorial services I referred to this statement, and remarked that my attachment for him remained unabated and I was willing for my friends to consider that my desire was to go to him when I died,

because I imagined he was very near to the Saviour, nearer in position, perhaps, than I hoped would be accorded me."

Among Dr. Mell's admirers and friends who were members of Antioch church none loved him more than Mrs. D. B. Fitzgerald, *nee* Miss Mary E. Crowley. This attachment was sincerely returned by Dr. Mell, and for a number of years Miss Crowley was an occupant of his home, while pursuing a course of study under him, and he called her his adopted daughter. Being thus thrown in daily communion with him she had a most excellent opportunity of studying his character. This lady has kindly furnished the following reminiscences of Dr. Mell's life while pastor of Antioch church.

"As far back in the dim recollections of an early childhood as I can go, I recall old Antioch church in Oglethorpe county, Georgia. Memory paints the scene in warm, soft colors, and tender associations weave a magic spell, as I recall the old-fashioned house with its elevated pulpit, and the long rows of high benches where a restless little girl sat swinging her feet and listening in a vague way to the words that fell from the lips of the preacher. The old church was modernized long years ago; many comforts and graces have been added to its interior, and the white walls glisten outside as it stands embowered in the grove of giant oaks that have overshadowed

it for more than three score years. There I first attended divine services under the preaching of Rev. P. H. Mell. Permitted under a kind Providence to grow up under his pastoral hand, receiving first a child's share of his ministrations and comprehending little of what was said, then as I grew up learning more and more of his marvelous power, I was led to the Saviour by his faithful guidance. Baptized by him, and afterwards sitting at his feet as a pupil; occupying a chair by his fireside; sharing in the love he bestowed on his children; receiving often from his fatherly lips the tender epithet, 'my daughter,' it is with both pleasure and pain I bring a tribute of affection to place in this memorial volume.

"Those people who decry long pastorates would find stout opposition in the communities where he preached. So strongly were the people attached to him that it was not unusual to hear the name of 'Mell's Kingdom' applied to this territory. The bond between pastor and people was so strong that though a temporary supply had to be put in during a long illness, late in life, yet the church would never relinquish her claims on him until the summons to come up higher was spoken by the Master.

"When first called to take charge of the church Dr. Mell found it in a sad state of confusion. He said a number of members were drifting off into Arminianism. He loved the truth too well to blow

hot and cold with the same breath. If it was a *Baptist* church it must have doctrines peculiar to that denomination preached to it. And with that boldness, clearness and vigor of speech that marked him, he preached to them the doctrines of predestination, election, free-grace, etc. He said it was always *his* business to preach the truth as he found it in God's Word, and leave the matter there, feeling that God would take care of the results. But while he never swerved an inch from the defence of truth as he believed it, he was most courteous to those who differed with him. Among those who sat under his ministry for ten, twenty and twenty-five years were people of other denominations who were as warm friends as any he had. Some Methodist brethren attended every conference meeting as regularly as did those of his own flock, and it was a source of great pleasure to him. They might shake their heads at what they called his 'hard doctrine,' but they would shake his hand as cordially at the close of the sermon and they claimed a share of his visits as much as did the members of his own flock.

"He was in the midst of the trouble at Penfield when he took charge of the churches at Antioch and Bairdstown, and espousing his cause with that enthusiasm that always characterized his followers, they pledged themselves to his support, and stood squarely beside him in

all that painful period. This loyal affection was always a source of infinite gratification to him, and he often alluded to the fact. 'I *know* my people *love* me,' he was wont to say, 'they have shown it unmistakably.'

"Soon after his connection with Antioch church a circumstance arose to which he often recurred in after years, and it did much to strengthen his reliance on the guiding hand of an over-ruling Providence. A young lady of most beautiful Christian character, one greatly beloved by all who knew her, met a most tragic fate, being burned to death. The death caused a great gloom to fall over the community. It was the custom in those days to have a funeral sermon preached months after the subject of the discourse had been buried. Her family, complying with the common practice, had arranged to have a discourse preached commemorative of her, and so requested Mr. Mell, mentioning the time they had selected. It always pained Mr. Mell to disappoint any one, and on such an occasion, when his sympathies were so aroused, and when he knew that none of the young lady's family, except one, were professors of religion, it grieved him to refuse such a request, but to acquiesce was to overthrow all his plans. It was at the beginning of one of his annual meetings and there was a deep anxiety on his part to have nothing disturb the minds of his people.

He had even prepared a sermon for that very day, and to preach a funeral instead seemed to be unwise, and in as gentle terms as possible he attempted to dissuade the lady's father from such a step; but the old gentleman insisted, and gave such good reasons for so doing, that Mr. Mell at last, though with a sad heart, consented to lay aside the sermon that he thought really suited the needs of the people, and instead, to preach the memorial discourse. The more he inquired into the character of the young lady, and of the awful circumstances of her death, and of her hope in the Saviour, the more he began to realize how it might be that God could make this an occasion to forward His work in the hearts of the people. The outcome of it was wonderful, for during the two weeks' meeting that followed more than sixty people dated conviction from that sermon. Mr. Mell often referred to this as one of the best meetings he was ever in, for he baptized fifty into the church, five of whom were of the immediate family of the deceased lady, and some connected themselves with other churches.

“Very much of his power as a preacher lay in the way he had of getting close to his people. His custom was to visit *all* of them, and so anxious were they not to miss the expected pleasure that he made engagements ahead often as far as three months. The humblest householder was

glad to entertain 'Brother Mell,' and the same ease of manner characterized him whether he sat at the bountiful board of the rich, or broke the plain bread and partook of the cup of milk from the pine table of the poorest. There was never any *stooping* to be on an equality with any man, or woman, or little child; he regarded all as good and worthy until they had proven themselves to be otherwise. His own purity of motive won the confidence and esteem of others; and he never judged a man by the coat he wore, or measured his worth by any uncouthness of manner or speech. The roughness might be only a lack of education and training—the coarse shell enclosing a good and wholesome fruit. And so he won first the admiration and then the love of all who came near him. He was the confidant of his people, they told him all their personal experiences, and he listened with tender sympathy. If a poor man was harassed with debt, broken hearted over a wilful child, or bowed down with bereavement, he never felt his load to be quite so heavy after he had talked it over with 'Brother Mell.' Many a poor wife grieving over a wicked husband or son, who could not bear to mention her sorrow and shame to any one else, told him all her heart-break. He was no less a welcome addition to the merry groups of young folks, his keen appreciation of humor, his love of a good joke, his inimitable

way of relating an anecdote, all made him an acquisition to any crowd, or a pleasant companion at any fireside. To them all he was a warm friend, the kind, sympathetic, wise counselor and faithful pastor.

“He was so evenly balanced in his judgments that it was almost unheard of for any one to object to his rulings in conference. If a member of the church was charged with un-Christian conduct the greatest care was exercised to prevent any false accusations and the case conducted with the greatest regard for the feelings of the offender. Dr. Mell always visited the one arraigned and listened to his side of the story and showed him his error in such a gentle, loving way that he almost always reclaimed the wanderer. In one instance a brother was contrary and cold; his brethren could not get on peaceably with him; there was constant cause of complaint; at last Dr. Mell said, ‘Let him alone.’ He was quietly ignored and left to himself; he began to reflect, since it takes two to quarrel, and the end of it was that at a subsequent meeting he came with contrition and confession of fault and begged the brethren to forgive him, and lived and died a useful member of the church.

“Dr. Mell’s character was too positive not to find opponents in the world, and there were among outsiders some who said he was simply

a strong doctrinal preacher, not an eloquent man, but one who fed his people on 'hard corn.' If, as Webster says, 'eloquence is the power of expressing strong emotions, in an effective, impassioned and elevated manner,' then truly was Dr. Mell an eloquent man. No one who sat under his ministry at those two churches could make such an adverse criticism of him. He always prepared a skeleton of each discourse, which he fixed well in his mind before going into the pulpit, and after reading the text, he closed the Bible, and preached without any notes before him. The little thirty-minute sermons that some preachers offer to an already over-fed congregation pale beside the matchless discourses he used to give the crowds at Antioch and Bairdstown. His slender, lithe figure rose in its strength; his piercing eyes glowed or melted in tender pathos as his mind grasped the glorious truths of the Gospel; he held his hearers spell-bound many times a full hour, and, if the theme was unusually grand, and far-reaching in its fuller development, he stood for an hour and a half, and yet his people never thought he preached long. He started out by stating his propositions clearly and distinctly, and then proceeded to bring forward and support them with such an array of argument and of Scriptural authority, and clothed his ideas in language so plain, so simple, so strong, so *beautiful*, that the

truth was fixed in the minds of his listeners. He used to say, laughingly, and yet with a degree of pride, that he could never 'warm over an old broth' with his people, for many of them were accustomed to mark and date the texts he preached from, so forcibly did the sermons impress their minds.

‘As the natural result of his long pastorate he had a most intimate acquaintance with his flock, and knew just their needs; if there was one bowed down in sorrow, fitting into the sermon would be words of truest comfort; if a sinner was smarting under the lash of a guilty conscience, or mournfully seeking relief from sin, some words suited to his individual needs were sure to come from the lips of the good pastor, and so of all. Did evil creep in, he knew just where and when to strike most effectively to arrest it. Once he saw that intemperance was gaining the mastery over some of the weaker ones of his charge; some had been intoxicated, and others more covert in sin drank enough to keep the blood at fever heat, and yet were never so fully under the influence of whisky as to be called drunk; and so, while not amenable to arraignment before the church, were losing their own usefulness, and crippling the cause of Christ. In a sermon he rebuked the sin in stinging terms. Leaning over his pulpit, and casting an eagle glance over the congregation, which

caused the guilty ones to quail, he said: 'You thought nobody saw you when you went into your house, and in that private closet, with door closed, you drank till your brain was fired with the fearful draught; hiding your demijohn and your jug, thinking to conceal your sin and shame. *Be sure your sin will find you out.*' So closely did he draw the portrait, so accurately did he read men's faces, that he pursued this line of thought till one of the tipplers became so angry that he would not speak to his pastor. Dr. Mell never permitted such conduct to go unnoticed, so inquired of the brother what did he mean by such coldness and aversion. 'Who has been talking to you about me?' inquired the man in angry impatience, 'I *know* though, I did ask one man to drink with me, *he* told you, I *know* he did.'

"Dr. Mell fixed his penetrating eyes on the man in grieved surprise. 'Have *you* been drinking? My dear brother, you have betrayed yourself. No one ever told me *you* kept your jug.' Self-condemned, there was nothing for the weak brother to do but to acknowledge his sin. No doubt he felt like 'kicking' himself, as he caught the gleam of an amused twinkle in the good Doctor's eye, at the ludicrous position in which he had placed himself. The keenness of perception, the wonderful power to read people, made Dr. Mell a master among men. And yet he was

so gentle, so courteous, so considerate of the feelings of others, even when administering severe rebuke of sin, that he drew the transgressor to him instead of driving him away.

‘He would never serve city churches, though many very fine positions were offered him. He always said he wanted to preach to a *hungry* congregation. He often remarked: ‘People in cities hear so much, so many sermons, lectures, exhortations, their ears are heavy with hearing. They listen more critically, are more easily fatigued, but not so with my country people. When I go to them once or, at most, twice in the month and stand up before an intelligent audience, who have been busy with other than mental work, I know from the attentive attitude, the earnest expression, the profound silence, that I have *hearers* indeed. Their minds are like well-prepared soil.’ And to these it was his joy to preach. Never had a preacher more respectful attention, never prevailed better order than in his churches when he spoke. He believed that country churches cannot prosper without protracted meetings. He made this statement in a letter written just before his retirement from the pastorate, and it was the result of a long experience. No sketch of his life work can be complete without some more than passing mention of his manner of conducting these annual meetings. As he was a member of the faculty of Mercer University,

and afterwards of the University of Georgia, the only time for such meetings was during the summer vacation. The meeting always began on Friday and continued three days, and was protracted one week, ten days, or two weeks, as the Lord seemed to direct. There were two services each day, and a basket dinner. He did not believe in night meetings for country churches, but by spending the day it was possible for several churches to be largely represented at these meetings. Old and young were there. It was an interesting occasion. Alas! that it is so rarely seen now. The present generation laughs at such gatherings and calls them picnic frolics and courting schools, but it has given us no more satisfactory substitute. Dr. Mell said he would not give the one hour of intermission, after the dinner was over, for any sermon, for when the people were all together, he could go amongst them and find out their needs. Many a poor despairing soul has been pointed to the Saviour by the beloved pastor or by those of his people who labored with him, in this interval at noon. What crowds attended! Early in the mornings of the long summer days they began to assemble, and it was no unusual sight to see handsome carriages, and many lighter vehicles, and many on horse-back approaching the church from every direction. The colored servants were there to wait upon the crowds at dinner, or to take charge of the

horses; and seats were always provided for these people, and numbers of them were baptized into the fellowship of the church. Cultured and refined gentlewomen and gentlemen were there, for 'Mell's Kingdom' contained a rural population second to none in the State. At ten o'clock there was a prayer meeting, and at eleven o'clock a sermon; after this an invitation was extended to those desiring prayer, and some sweet old hymn was sung. One that he loved, was:

'Alas, and did my Saviour bleed?'

"Often his eyes overflowed at the closing lines:

'Here, Lord, I give myself to thee,
'Tis all that I can do.'

"Or perhaps that other old favorite:

'Come humble sinner in whose breast
A thousand thoughts revolve,
Come with your guilt and sins oppressed
And make this last resolve.'

"With an earnestness and pathos that few could resist he would plead with the ungodly that they might make the words of the poet their own:

I'll go to Jesus though my sins
Have like a mountain rose,
I know his courts I'll enter in,
Whatever may oppose.'

“When the hour for intermission came he talked not only with each one who had asked for prayer, but also with many others whose anxious countenances he had scanned while preaching. He knew his people so well that he could call on just the right ones to help in this outside work. Brethren who were too diffident to lead in prayer, or who had not the gift of speech for a public exhortation, but who loved the Lord Jesus, could in this way lead sinners to the cross. ‘The old, old story, the sweet old story of Jesus and his love’ was spoken in tender accents by those whose voices were heard only by the ones addressed. The fruits of such labor are yet to be seen even after pastor and people are gathered before the Great White Throne. When the congregations reassembled, while some were careless, of course, and had spent the time in frivolity, by far the larger number were deeply serious, prayerful and in earnest, anxiously waiting for the message from the man of God, while the pastor’s heart burned within him with zeal toward God, and love for the people he had taught so long. A clear pool of sparkling water was situated near by, and thither the crowd thronged, and ranged themselves around, the swelling hillsides forming nature’s amphitheatre, the green trees spreading out their leafy banners, and over all God’s clear blue sky; there he baptized them; ten, twenty, and twice he

baptized fifty happy converts as the fruits of one annual meeting at Antioch. The same may be said in regard to the work at Bairdstown. Dr. Mell *loved* these meetings! Some of the finest sermons he ever preached were delivered on such occasions. He never seemed to grow weary through days of such labor. He was never so happy as when preaching Jesus.

“He felt a deep and abiding interest in all young people, and his genial humor, his kind consideration, his ready assistance gave easy access into their hearts, and they were never afraid of the preacher. When he had retired from the pastorate, he still visited his old charges, and on one occasion was present when a timid young girl presented herself as a candidate for baptism. The pastor asked her questions and somehow she became embarrassed and confused; finally he told her that as her statements were so unsatisfactory, he advised her to wait. Instantly Dr. Mell stepped to her side, and in his kind, fatherly way reassured her, drew out from her in faltering but unmistakable words the story of her conviction, and of her hope in a pardoning Saviour. He got her to talk fully, and then he made the statement to the church for her. She was received, and is now a useful and happy Christian, and loves and reveres Dr. Mell as the ‘best man’ she ever knew.

“On one occasion, when Mr. Overton was pastor at Antioch and had carried on a meeting of several days, he was compelled to close the services; but there was such a deep feeling of earnestness in the congregation, the church members were very sad to see such a meeting closed. They talked the matter over and decided to come again the next day and have a prayer meeting. ‘Oh,’ said one, ‘if only our dear old pastor, Dr. Mell, could come now.’ But they had no hope of such a thing. Dr. Mell passed up the road toward Athens that afternoon, and as the train stopped at Antioch he stepped out to see if any friends were there, and some one begged him to come back to church the next day, even if he could not preach. At the close of the prayer meeting the next morning, in walked Dr. Mell, to the surprise and delight of his friends. God had sent him, for he preached with the greatest ease, and joy, and there was a most gracious outpouring of the Spirit, and many were added to the church. This season was a most happy one to him, it was the reaping of what he had sown years before—may we say it was the aftermath?

“How like a panorama these scenes pass! The grey-headed fathers and mothers in Israel have gone the way of all the earth. Those who were then young and blooming are now bending under the weight of years. Snowy locks, wrin-

kled faces, faltering voices show how we all 'do fade as a leaf.'

"A young man in the prime of stalwart manhood occupies the pulpit at old Antioch,* and his congregation look to him for spiritual food; he goes in and out among his flock, and they love him, and thank God that one so worthy has been placed where Dr. Mell stood. Who is he? 'One of Dr. Mell's boys.' A struggling lad, fighting his way through many obstacles. Dr. Mell helped him by word and deed, and he has proven himself worthy the confidence. A slender man, in middle life, preaches at Bairdstown.* During the late war he was wounded by a ball that well-nigh let his soul out through the rent in his side, but the bullet could not harm his manly spirit, and he lives to preach with burning zeal and eloquent tongue to the people among whom he was born and reared—another of 'Dr. Mell's boys.' How many of them there are. What a noble band of brothers. They preach the same gospel he so loved, and thus the glorious work of his life goes on, though his lips have been silenced. How poor and puny seem the struggles for political preferment when contrasted with the life of this noble preacher of the Word. The mind sinks and is lost in the blaze of light that falls on us as we try to picture the scene hereafter when the book shall be

*1890.

opened and all the grand sum total of the results of such long and faithful service to God shall be made manifest. Well might he sing:

‘And the Lord haste the day when faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll,
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul.’ ”

CHAPTER VII.

DIFFICULTIES IN MERCER UNIVERSITY, FOLLOWED BY HIS RESIGNATION.

In 1843 it became evident to the friends of Mercer University that the Institution was suffering for want of better management. This condition of affairs was so well known to the members of the Faculty that they agreed some radical change was absolutely necessary to bring the University back to its former prosperity. Some members of the Faculty, Prof. Mell among the number, sent in their resignations and stated to the Board that they "considered a radical change in its present organization essential to its prosperity, and desired to leave the Brethren of the Board unembarrassed to make that change." The Board elected Dr. Dagg President and refused to accept the resignations of the members of the Faculty. The Institution soon began to revive, and the outlook greatly brightened. This disposition on the part of Professor Mell, shown in this incident, proves what was true of him throughout his life, that he was ready to sacrifice his own convenience and self-

interest whenever he thought that by so doing he would advance the cause for which he was working.

In 1851 he was elected Secretary of the Southern Baptist Publication Society, located in Charleston, S. C., but he declined this office because the position would take him out of the State, and away from his field of labor and many warm, personal friends. He served, however, for a number of years on the Board of Managers of this Society.

On the 10th of June, 1854, he was unanimously elected President of Wake Forest College of North Carolina, but this position he also declined.

From this date until 1855 the affairs at Penfield moved on very smoothly. At this time, however, a crisis occurred in the history of the University that resulted in serious trouble. Dr. Dagg, the venerable President, was requested by the Board to resign; and such reasons were assigned for this course as were calculated, in the opinion of Prof. Mell, to do great injustice to a capable and faithful officer. At that time it was the intention of the Board to elect Prof. P. H. Mell as Dr. Dagg's successor. Prof. Mell, in writing of this period, says: "This I learned from members of the Board, and from Prof. Crawford, who had made the necessary inquiries,

and who was the first to inform me that the Board had requested Dr. Dagg's resignation. Not willing to avail myself of this opportunity for personal aggrandizement at the expense of injustice to my venerable colleague, I united with all the other Professors, excepting Prof. Crawford (who declined to do so), in a respectful and legitimate testimony to the Board of Trustees, with the design to disabuse their minds in regard to Dr. Dagg." This availed nothing, however, and Dr. Dagg was retired. Very soon after Prof. Crawford was elected to fill the position of President, although against the wishes of almost the entire Faculty. There soon sprang up between Prof. Mell and President Crawford a difference of opinion in regard to the duties belonging to each, which resulted in an estrangement, and their resignations were offered to the Board. The matter was partially healed, by the friends of the two officers, for a time and their resignations were withdrawn. It was not long, however, before the trouble between them was fanned into a flame and Prof. Mell preferred to retire rather than to remain connected with the Institution under the management of a gentleman with whose administration he could not agree. So on October 23, 1855, he resigned the Professorship of Ancient Languages.

Dr. Dagg realizing the great sacrifice made in his behalf, wrote the following letters to show

his keen appreciation of the warm friendship extended him by Prof. Mell:

"REV. P. H. MELL:

DEAR BROTHER: The late act of the Board of Trustees has deprived the University of your valuable services, and you of the employment on which you were relying for the support of your growing family. It will also tend very seriously to affect, for a time, your reputation abroad. The public will not take pains to investigate the facts; but will conclude that a board of twenty-one men, selected for their wisdom to manage the University, would not permit such an act to pass, and stand responsible for it to the world, if it were without just cause. This influence is now bearing against you. In these circumstances, the opinions of those who know you best will at least be consolatory to you. One who has been intimately associated with you in the service of the University for nearly twelve years, offers his, in the subjoined copy of a letter this day enclosed to the President of the Board of Trustees. If it can further serve you, it is committed to your discretion.

Yours truly,

October 27th, 1855.

J. L. DAGG."

"TO THE HON. THOMAS STOCKS, President of the Board of Trustees of Mercer University:

DEAR BROTHER: From documents which I have seen, it appears that at the meeting of the Trustees, on Tuesday last, Prof. Mell was dismissed from office on a charge of hostility to the President, which charge was preferred against him by the President. Prof. Mell is regarded by the Board as a worthy Christian minister, and as a competent and laborious instructor. No failure in duty to the University appears to be laid to his charge. I had the pleasure of testifying before the Board in December last, that during the whole period of my Presidency (ten and one-half years), he had been the right arm of our disci-

pline; and I consider the present prosperity of the University attributable to no one more than to him.

When such an officer, on such a charge, so unsustained by proof, is dismissed from service by the Board, the reward of fidelity is too uncertain to render office desirable. It is my wish to retire from the University; I therefore respectfully present to you my resignation, to take effect six months from hence.

Yours truly,

J. L. DAGG.

PENFIELD, GA., October 27th, 1855."

The students, hearing of Prof. Mell's retirement from the University, held a meeting, at which resolutions were passed, expressing sorrow and disapprobation at the dismissal of an officer whom they had learned to love and whose attainments they so much admired. The following is a copy of these resolutions:

"Whereas—The pleasant relationship which Prof. Mell has heretofore sustained to the students of Mercer University as Professor of Ancient Languages no longer exists,

Resolved—That we, students of Mercer University, take this method of expressing our appreciation of his exalted merits as a true friend of the student, as an able and accomplished instructor, and as a faithful minister of the Gospel, and that we, with feelings of deep regret, see him retire from the responsible position which he has for so many years so honorably and successfully maintained.

Resolved—That in his retirement he will carry with him our best wishes for his future happiness and the earnest desire that in whatever sphere his lot may be cast, his labors may be rewarded with the same eminent success that has attended them during his connection with Mercer University.

Resolved—That as a testimonial of the high esteem and admiration which we entertain towards him, both as a man and as a laborious and competent Professor, we tender him a gold-headed cane, bearing the inscription: Prof. P. H. Mell, from students of Mercer University."

Mr. E. L. Compere, in company with the other young men, repaired to Prof. Mell's residence, and after a neat address presented the cane. Prof. Mell thanked the students for the beautiful testimonial of their esteem, and said:

"It shall be an ornament to me in my manhood, and, in old age, should Providence grant it to me, it shall be the support of my tottering steps. Even now there is a moral sentiment contained in it which enables me to stand more erect and tread with firmer footsteps in the midst of the inequalities and impediments that obstruct my pathway."

This promise was faithfully kept. The cane did support him through his manhood, and in old age became his daily companion. He kept the memento with the greatest care throughout his long eventful life as a pleasant reminder of the few bright rays that penetrated the dark clouds surrounding him in 1855 and 1856. The writer of this biography now possesses this cane and it shall be as sacredly kept through his life as it was preserved through that of his father.

About the same time the citizens of Penfield assembled in the town hall and presented Prof. Mell with a handsome gold watch as an evidence of the kind regard they had for him, and the

high estimate they placed upon his character as a public-spirited citizen. This watch he wore until a few years since, when he gave it to his son, T. S. Mell, who now keeps it as one of his most valuable possessions.

While these troubles were crowding around Prof. Mell thick and fast at Penfield, the great Baptist Denomination did not stand silently by and see him crushed without raising a hand in his behalf and in his defense, but he was elected Moderator of the Georgia Baptist Association. This is the oldest and most influential Association in the State. He was elected to this position in October, 1855, and here began the manifestation of that knowledge of Parliamentary Law which made him justly famous in after years as the "Prince of Parliamentarians." While attending the meetings of this Association he became intimately acquainted with such men as Sanders, Dagg, Hillyer, Callaway, Tupper, the Kilpatricks, Absalom Jones, Thomas Stocks, Dickinson, Thornton, John L. West, Jesse Mercer, Sherwood, Mallory, Marshall, and others.

The members of Dr. Mell's churches at Antioch and Bairdstown rallied around him during his troubles with the Board of Trustees of Mercer University, and without an exception, warmly sustained him during those dark days. Besides giving him all the moral support in their power, they largely increased his salary so that his

family should not want. This great kindness and deep affection, extended by his people when he most needed their friendship and sympathy, touched him very deeply, and he never lost an opportunity to express his gratitude.

At this time his friends in Georgia and other States, knowing that he was disengaged, and appreciating his work as a preacher and teacher, offered him a number of positions of importance and distinction, as President of colleges and pastor of churches. The following are given to indicate the character of these positions:

In 1855 he was elected President of the Baptist College of Mississippi; also Principal of the Montgomery, Alabama, Female Institute; and pastor of the First Baptist Church of Savannah, Georgia.

In 1856 the Mississippi College authorities, declining to accept his refusal of the Presidency tendered him a short time before, re-elected him to that position, which he again declined.

In reply to the notification of the election to the Presidency of the Mississippi College, he wrote as follows:

“PENFIELD, GA., November 26th, 1855.

DEAR BROTHER PHILIPS:

I regret very much that your letters conveying the flattering announcement of my unanimous election to the Presidency of your college have found me in such circumstances.

Accompanying this you will receive a printed document which makes an exposition of recent events in Mercer University. The day after the catastrophe here I requested Brother Compere to address you and inform you of the fact that you might be prevented from acting in the dark in regard to your proposed election. I have reason to infer, therefore, that your Trustees were not in possession of at least all of the facts when they met. If you were so uninformed at the time, duty to myself as well as to you, would compel me to decline the appointment. And even if you acted with a full knowledge of the facts it would not be, in my opinion, judicious for either of us to consent to the proposed connection until I had had time to repel the onsets which are made on me and to wipe out the stain which it is attempted to affix to me. With this object in view I have declined other brilliant offers, and have concluded to remain for the next year right here (Penfield), serving my two churches who have nobly come up to the rescue, offering to pay me at the rate of \$1600 per year. Thus far I have no reason to complain of the manner in which the Denomination, in all parts of the State, receive the action of a fragment of the Board of Trustees.

It is gratifying to me to know of the magnanimity displayed by your Board in waiving objections to me on the ground of my reputed opposition to revision. But the fact is they are misinformed in reference to my position on the subject. I have never taken ground of opposition to 'revision'; on the contrary, I told Brother Waller that if the Society could be formed to revise the English Scriptures, and to dissolve as soon as completed. I would join it and labor for it with all my might. I have never even taken public ground of opposition to the 'Bible Union,' and *never expect to*. There are some features which I wish were different, but the whole thing is a foregone conclusion and resistance to it now can, in my opinion, do no good.

I have been opposed to connecting the Revision Movement, either in fact or in appearance, with the Southern

Baptist Convention, because it is a question that elicits a difference of sentiment, and I am unwilling that our missionary enterprises should be embarrassed by it, but I have never had an opportunity publicly to express even this. . . .

I am sorry to say that circumstances leave me no option in the case, and compel me to respectfully decline the appointment to the Presidency of Mississippi College.

Faternally yours,

P. H. MELL."

Upon his re-election to the Presidency of Mississippi College, in spite of the above letter, Prof. Mell wrote as follows:

"PENFIELD, GA., June 22nd, 1856.

DEAR BROTHER PHILIPS:

I received your letter informing me that I had again been elected President of Mississippi College, and requesting my acceptance of the post. . . .

While I have an exalted conception of the post you offer me, for the honor attached to it, and for the opportunity for usefulness it affords, and while I can never forget the magnanimity with which your Board have treated me, I still feel constrained respectfully to decline the Presidency of Mississippi College for the following reasons:

Your design, I learn, in electing a President now is to give your Institution an impulse by gathering to its support those who have stood aloof because the organization was not complete, and by inspiring confidence in the minds of all its friends. To secure this result the President-elect must come to you with some degree at least of prestige. It is not enough that he be one able to meet difficulties and discouragements and remove them; and by patience and continued efficiency win the confidence and co-operation that are not at first unhesitatingly ac-

corded to him. What you need is not a man who can acquire capital, but one who has it now to put into the concern. . . . In a case like your's, when there are so many other gentlemen, to say the least, fully as competent as myself, whose services can be secured, and who can enter upon office with *eclat*, I should not for selfish considerations subject you to the danger of a failure in your main design. I have been for some time engaged in a controversy here which has not as yet been entirely settled. During the progress of it I have been the object of no little disparagement, public and private, and the subject of summary, not to say ignominious treatment from those with whom I have been long associated. Now while I am convinced that the course of conduct which invited all this was the most honorable and disinterested of my life, yet it is certain that many, not being in possession of the facts of the case, do not at the present so esteem it. It would be selfish in me, therefore, to permit great interests in other States to embarrass themselves by connection with me until I have succeeded in removing misapprehensions, refuting calumnies and demonstrating to the candid and the discerning in my own State that I have been misapprehended and misjudged. Besides this I instinctively shrink from the proposition to accept office, when by accepting I would dislodge or even disquiet in his relations, an officer whose commission is of an older date and whose services are appreciated. You were candid enough to say to me that my acceptance might probably involve the resignation of one of the professors. Now I do not know what personal objections that officer, who has had a long and intimate association with me, raises to me; but I feel under obligations to respect them. He was my pupil for three years; and I feel competent and free to say that he possesses the intellectual qualifications and literary attainments to make you a competent professor." . . . (This Professor, in after years, was most bitter in his opposition to the writer of this letter.)

"I beg the Board of Trustees to accept the expression

of my lasting gratitude for the magnanimity with which they have treated me.

With the highest esteem for yourself, personally, my dear Brother,

Yours in Christ's bonds,

P. H. MELL.

The preceding and following letters are given in this connection in order to bring out some of the salient points in Professor Mell's position during his contest with the authorities of Mercer University. They go to show, in a striking manner, how earnestly he combated the difficulties crowding around him. Many men would have yielded under such pressure, but the early training to which he was subjected, the hard blows he received from the world from the time he was fourteen years of age, well prepared him for these stormy times; and the successful surmounting of all these difficulties in after years, no doubt, was largely due to the rough experiences of his young life.

"PENFIELD, GA., September 17th, 1856.

DEAR BROTHER PHILIPS:

I have just returned home after an almost continuous absence of seven weeks. Knowing that your Board would not meet until October I have delayed as long as possible with the hope that, by some possibility, I might be so relieved from the embarrassment, as to answer you in accordance with your expressed wishes. When I declined your call I was influenced chiefly by the apprehension that if I accepted with (as appeared to me) my disabilities, I would be the occasion of division among you. That apprehen-

sion has been entirely removed by the subsequent action and testimony of your Board. Your last official communication, however, found me laboring under new embarrassments. In the first place my two churches had extended me a call indefinite as to duration, offering to me an amount adequate to my support. *This I had unconditionally accepted.* Then again two other colleges in my own state had elected me each as their President, and a company of friends in Columbus had offered to me an independent school with a salary of \$4,000 a year, and the colleges have been up to this time offering to me the most urgent appeals to accept. Among them all no position (in an Institution) has seemed to me to afford so great an opportunity for usefulness as that tendered by you; and surely, so far as honor is concerned, it contains enough to satisfy the cravings of the most eager ambition.

I have found, however, on cautious inquiry (and I have delayed in order that I might make such inquiry) that my brethren are unwilling to give me up. I suppose if I should make formal application to be released they would not refuse; but this I do not feel at liberty to do, when I remember how generously they stood up to me in my hour of trial—when the storm was raging most fiercely against me. Besides, the Lord has continued to bless my ministry most signally among them; and I am led from Providential indications, as well as from impressions made upon my mind, to believe that it is the Lord's will that I should give myself exclusively to the work of the gospel ministry—that which has been the cherished desire of my heart ever since I took the ministerial vows upon me.

I see it stated in the newspapers that I have accepted the Presidency of the Cherokee Baptist College; but it is all news to me. They themselves requested me not to give them an answer until October, knowing that if I answered at the time they wrote me, it would be in a declination.

Under all the circumstances, therefore, having weighed the subject carefully, and I trust, prayerfully, I have come to the conclusion that it is out of my power to with-

draw the declination of the post offered to me by the Trustees of Mississippi College. I feel impelled to do so. I shall ever retain as a cherished memory the acquaintance I have formed with the character of the Mississippi Baptists, and the kind and magnanimous treatment I have received at their hands. I hope I shall ever have some place in their confidence and affections; and I beg to assure them that I have delayed my reply to their last official communication solely by the desire to see whether the way might not be opened for forming more intimate relations with brethren who have done so much to command my gratitude and esteem.

Yours in gospel bonds,

P. H. MELL."

"PENFIELD, GA., October 21st, 1856.

HON. M. A. COOPER, Etowah, Ga.:

DEAR BROTHER: You have doubtless heard ere this that I have considered it my duty to decline the Presidency of Cherokee Baptist College. Prior engagements to my churches, from which I could not have been honorably released, prevented my acceptance.

Besides, there were other serious difficulties in the way if these had been removed. In the first place there was the danger that my acceptance would be the occasion of the perpetuation of party spirit and strife among the Baptists of Georgia. It is evident that the gentlemen connected with this Institution here (Mercer) whom I have offended, because I protested against their treatment of Dr. Dagg, are determined that I shall attain to no *denominational* position in Georgia. (On this point the history of their secret action in regard to the Christian Index would be edifying). My acceptance, therefore, would have been the signal for onsets upon me as the 'enemy of Mercer University,' as 'impelled by motives of revenge,' as 'determined to rule or ruin.' This would have roused in turn my friends—not a few—who consider that I have not been justly treated by these brethren: and the danger would have been that the two Institutions

would have been arrayed in open hostility, and the Baptist Denomination exhibited to the world as a 'divided, discordant, belligerent' community. Now while I have no reason to feel the slightest temptation to refrain from any thing because these gentlemen object, I feel entirely unwilling to strike even them a blow which, feeble as it may be, may fall in any measure upon the denomination I love.

This danger, however, may have been avoided by watchfulness: and it is more than half obviated as soon as we become aware of its existence.

Another difficulty in the way of my acceptance was the ignominious treatment I had received from the *Baptist Denomination* through its agents, in the fact that I was disgracefully expelled from position in Mercer University. I still stand before the world, so far as the action of Georgia Baptists is concerned, as one whose conduct was such as to deserve summary expulsion from office. Now I feel unwilling to embarrass the promising educational interests in Cherokee by aiding it to form a connection with a man who appears before the world as under the ban of his brethren.

At the Convention I asked not for full reparation, but merely that justice might be done to my reputation. These trustees so far from showing a disposition to acquit my moral and professional character of all blame, trumped up a set of frivolous and unfounded charges against me, (which were evidently an after thought or they would not have testified at the time they expelled me that I was a worthy 'Christian minister, and a competent and laborious officer long connected with the University'), and then were driven to the humiliating necessity of voting for a report which, whatever might be to me its objectionable features, bore inferential testimony to my competency and faithfulness as a college officer--the very things (the latter, at least) which they attempted before your committee to impugn.

Now if they had reported to the Convention that they had removed me merely because they thought Dr. Craw-

ford and I could not co-operate, and that they preferred Dr. Crawford to me, insinuating no blame to me, I should not have opened my mouth. But instead they came there with the most meagre statements, after spreading the rumor all over the State that they would be provided with another report containing charges against me which, if presented, would ruin my reputation. And I have authentic information that some of them are still whispering that they have private reasons for their action which if divulged would ruin me.

I announced to the Convention that if they would print only the conclusion to which the committee arrived I would be satisfied; and I understood that body so to order, but such a showing does not appear on the minutes. Nor am I ignorant of the influences the most active of these Trustees brought to bear on the Clerk to accomplish this result. The *conclusion of the committee's report* based the action of the Trustees upon the want of harmony: the *synopsis*, which precedes the conclusion, intimates that Dr. Dagg and I were to blame for that want of harmony. I had no opportunity to meet the statements in that synopsis before your committee, for I was ignorant of its existence until it was read out in public; but if I did not demonstrate its inaccuracy on the floor of the Convention it has been done conclusively by Dr. Dagg in a letter to Brother Burney, a copy of which in justice to you I suppose the Trustees have sent you.

Now I do not mention these things in a way of querulousness; for I do not murmur on the field of battle, especially when I am contending for the right. I did not fail entirely to foresee the consequences which would result to me when I dared (ignoring self-interest) to protest against the injustice of those in power; and whatever of those consequences I may not be able to ward off and repel, I trust I have manliness and fortitude enough to endure. I have mentioned these things as *facts* which constitute disabilities in the way of my acceptance of office in an Institution. Some may call this *pride*; others, looking at it from a slightly different point of view, may charac-

terize it as *self-respect*; while others still may view it as *common prudence* and a disinterested desire to avoid injury to an Institution that honors me with an invitation to exalted position.

This objection the college at Cassville may have overruled; and by its election of me to its Presidency, with a knowledge of all the facts, it evinced a willingness to assume all the responsibilities in the premises. It will give me pleasure to aid, to the extent of my ability, the educational interests of Cherokee, Georgia. I agree with you most heartily in the wish that the Georgia Baptists could unite in establishing an Institution in such locality and under such auspices as to command the confidence and secure the patronage of all

With great respect I remain

Yours Fraternally,

P. H. MELL."

The following are the extracts referred to in the above letters, and a full account of the proceedings of the State Baptist Convention will be found by reference to the minutes of 1856 of the session of the convention in Savannah, Georgia.

"Read the Report of the Trustees of Mercer University, and on motion of brother Gaskill, adopted the following resolution:

Resolved, That the report of the Board of Trustees be referred to a select Committee of Seven, and that said Committee be requested to examine the proceedings of the Board of Trustees, concerning their dealings with Professor Mell, seeking all the information they can get from both parties.

In accordance with this resolution the Moderator announced the following committee: Brethren M. A. Cooper, R. L. McWhorter, V. A. Gaskill, E. Dyer, J. S. Baker, D. W. Lewis, and H. C. Hornady

Resumed the reading of the report of the committee to whom was referred the report of the Board of Trustees, which was adopted. It was agreed that the historical part of the report be omitted in the printed record, and conclusion of the committee published as follows:

From the foregoing state of facts, your committee are of the opinion, that the proceedings of the Board of Trustees in their dealings with brother Mell, have been prompted by a desire faithfully to administer the trust confided to them; that in the course of administration, they were under the painful necessity of re-organizing the Faculty of the college under circumstances of great trial arising from the want of harmony and co-operation in the Faculty. The difficulty and magnitude of these trials arose, mainly from the fact, that the schism existed between most worthy brethren and eminent professors, making it indispensable in either alternative to set aside one or more professors, who, under other circumstances, they might and would have gladly retained.

As regards the wrong and injury complained of by Brother Mell, your committee are of opinion,

1st, That Professor Mell was not removed on account of charges preferred—not as the result of a trial and conviction for malfeasance and nonfeasance—acts committed or duties neglected—but simply for and on account of the fact, that there was not and could not obtain a co-operation between him and Dr. Crawford, whom the Trustees deemed it best to retain. In doing which they have borne testimonial to the eminent services and distinguished ability of Professor Mell, and their confidence in him as a Christian minister. Your committee think it indispensable to a successful administration of the trust reposed, that the Trustees should exercise the power of removal, with or without a trial, or charges preferred. The committee find that such has been the course in Professor Mell's case, and that the result ought not to disparage his character as a Professor and Instructor, and may well have been done without imputation on his high character as a Christian and a minister of the gospel."

In an appendix to this minute the following note occurs, signed by the Clerk, and it was the publication of this Report in full which Prof. Mell objected to in his letter to Mr. Cooper.

“On page 12 the following record appears in connection with the report of the committee on the report of the Board of Trustees: ‘It was agreed that the historical part of the report be omitted in the printed record, and the conclusion of the committee published.’

“Since the printing of this portion of the minutes I have received such information as leaves in doubt the design of the Convention respecting the printing of the report. On the last morning of the late meeting, when the minutes of the preceding day were read, some alterations were made by general consent, without a formal vote. One was to suppress a notice of a minority report; another was to erase the vote on the adoption of the majority report. It was also suggested, that all the details of the majority report be omitted, except the conclusions of the committee. No opposition to this suggestion was expressed at the time, and after the Convention I had such testimony from prominent brethren, including those who voted for the report as well as those who opposed it, as satisfied me that it was the wish of the Convention to publish only the conclusions of the committee. The author of the minority report, in consenting to withdraw his paper, understood that nothing but the conclusions of the majority would appear. In an interview between the Moderator (Brother Stocks) and myself, he agreed to affix his signature to the minutes, on the supposition that the brethren most interested in the report concurred in the omission. But after I had sent the minutes to press, I received such counter testimony as convinced me that there was no unanimity on this point; and the Moderator revoked his decision on the following principle: ‘I am satisfied where any difference of opinion exists with members of the Convention as to facts, the officers must have

recourse to the original manuscript.' Being thus left without satisfactory evidence that the Convention designed to omit the committee's narrative, my only alternative is to publish the whole report, leaving out only such portions as the expressed vote of the Convention, and the general consent of the members, authorized to be omitted. I have, therefore, published the report in full, except the documents which were ordered to be returned to the Trustees and Brother Mell, and the letters of the committee in correspondence with the parties just named, which, I have no doubt, the Convention intended to suppress.

This note is published on my own responsibility and at my own expense.

CLERK."

Before the meeting of this Convention there was considerable apprehension on the part of the Board of Trustees and their friends that some move would be put on foot before the body to disquiet them and re-establish Professor Mell in the estimation of the Denomination. A number of letters were written to leading Baptists in the State and much canvassing was done to create an opposition to such a contemplated move. The following is a specimen of some of these documents, written by the friends of the Board at that time. This was addressed to Professor Mell on the 21st of April, 1856. For valid reasons the name signed to this letter is not published.

"DEAR BROTHER MELL :

Although from the course you pursued in Montgomery last year, I have no reason to believe

that you regard me as a friend, I still feel a desire to see you doing well—prospering and doing honor to yourself and our denomination. I will, therefore, take the liberty to express my views freely and candidly in reference to matters affecting your interests directly and the interests of the cause of Christ indirectly. It is a matter of little consequence to me whether you receive this favorably or unfavorably.

I think you have erred seriously—to the injury of yourself and to that of the common cause of our denomination, which we believe to be identified with the cause of Christ. My acquaintance with you and your situation in life, leads me to make many allowances for what I consider your errors, which others might not be disposed to make—I allude particularly to the course you have pursued in reference to the *college difficulties*. The publication of your pamphlet and speeches has done you far more injury than good, made more enemies than friends. Had you submitted in silence to the action of the Board, the sympathies of the denomination would have been with you, and you might have attained to a situation fully as honorable and as profitable as that which was lost to you, and at some future day have conferred on you all the honors and emoluments now withheld from you.

The continued agitation of the subject—the letters written and agencies employed, to rally your friends and revolutionize things at Penfield and in Savannah, has had fully as much effect to arouse your *opponents* as your *friends*. I regret to learn that it is in contemplation to agitate the subject in our State Convention, and to endeavor to elicit some action of that body in your favor. . . . Now suppose the effort fails? Will it not leave you in a worse situation than that in which you now are? If it does not fail it will advance your interest but very little at present; it will make enemies of many who now esteem you highly, and who would be willing to aid in your elevation, provided they can do it without taking sides with you against the Board; and worst of all *it will divide and cripple the energies of our denomination.*

If you make an issue with the Board at the Convention, you risk far more than you can possibly gain by any action that the Convention can be induced to take in your favor. I ask you to think seriously of this matter, and not to risk all upon a pitched battle.

I learn that an effort will be made, in the first instance to elect you to the Presidency of the Convention (I hope not with your concurrence). If you permit your friends to run you for the Presidency of the Convention, you will do what your *rival* has *refused* to do, and will thus present a *contrast* that cannot result in your favor I am anxious to save you for your own sake, for the sake of your family, and particularly for the sake of our denominational interests—but if you pursue a course which I conceive cannot fail to be injurious to our denomination—if constrained to come out for or against either, you know me too well to doubt on which side I will be found standing.

I have no favor to ask for myself, but I do ask for the sake of the cause of Christ, that you abstain, and seek to influence your friends to abstain, from any unnecessary agitation of your difficulties with the college.

My disapprobation of your acts does not induce any feelings towards you personally to prevent my subscribing myself sincerely

Your friend and Brother in Christ,

J. S. B."

This letter was treated with silence, but on the back of it is the following in Dr. Mell's handwriting: "This letter is ludicrously transparent. The author has never found reason to congratulate himself for having written it."

The entire case was thoroughly discussed before the Baptist State Convention that assembled at Savannah in 1856, and the denomination, in

most unmistakable terms, pronounced its disapproval of the action of the Board of Trustees of Mercer University. As already indicated, Prof. Mell was elected President of the Convention at the next session.

In the meantime Dr. Crawford had given up the Presidency of Mercer University because of his inability to harmonize the internal forces opposed to him. The Board of Trustees were making strenuous efforts to create a sentiment among the Baptists throughout the State to have him recalled at the coming Convention which would assemble at Americus in 1858. Looking to this purpose, Dr. David E. Butler, a member of this Board, wrote Dr. Mell the following letter of April 13th, 1858:

“DEAR BROTHER MELL:

I have but one object in writing this letter, that is to do right. I have hoped some brother would obtain your sentiments from whom I might learn them; but knowing of none such, I have concluded to do so for myself. I address you frankly, because we are brethren and if we confide not in each other our faith is vain.

You are aware that the Board of Trustees of Mercer University are looking to such an action at Americus as may call Brother Crawford back to the Presidency. It is believed an expression of opinion by the brethren generally, who may be there, will have its just weight with the Board. Among them to be present is yourself, and in some way your opinion will be consulted.

It is your views of this matter I now seek. Not as a member of the Board alone, but as your brother, desiring to know the right and then pursue it.

If you can co-operate with the Board many, many, brethren will rejoice. If your views do not accord with the movement many will deeply regret it.

I write for my own benefit and for no other object or purpose, unless you allow me to repeat what you may say.

Very truly yours in Christian bonds,

D. E. BUTLER."

To this the following reply was sent:

"ATHENS, GA., April 16th, 1858.

DEAR BROTHER BUTLER:

One of the prominent designs of my action in Augusta, was to relieve myself and the Board of Trustees of Mercer University from mutual complications. Though I desire the prosperity of that Institution, I am at present, with reference to it, entirely an outsider. That position in the present state of things, for its welfare and my comfort, it is best that I should maintain.

I hope, therefore, you will acquiesce in the propriety of my remaining isolated from all questions pertaining to Mercer University.

Yours fraternally,

P. H. MELL."

The papers in the possession of the writer relating to this period in the history of Mercer University furnish sufficient excuse for Professor Mell's position as outlined in the above correspondence. The Board of Trustees, instigated by Dr. Crawford, summarily ejected Professor Mell from office, injuring him, for a time, in reputation and pecuniary interest. This he publicly and privately declared to be an act of great injustice. Up to the meeting of the State Con-

vention in 1858 no attempt had been made by Dr. Crawford nor by the Board to redress his grievance. On the contrary, up to the organization of the Convention at Augusta in 1857, the latter did all they could to keep him apparently under the ban of the Baptist Denomination. It is true a reconciliation took place in Augusta. What was the nature of it—and how did it leave the parties related to each other?

The design of Professor Mell's whole action in Augusta, (after it was evident that his reputation had been protected,) was, besides healing the breach in the Baptist Denomination, to disembarass Mercer University in the then existing state of affairs, from any apparent antagonism with him and with those who sustained him, and to extricate himself from all complication with it and its Board of Managers—that they in their spheres and he in his might labor for the advancement of the cause of education, and for the harmony of the Baptist Zion in Georgia.

In the public reconciliation there was no concession made on either side, of any thing but feeling—neither party acknowledged to any wrong. Professor Mell, on his part (impliedly) pledged himself to cultivate feelings of kindness towards members of the Board of Trustees and to unite with *them* in the burial of past differences. They, on their part (impliedly), to discontinue any line of policy which tended to bear

invidiously upon him and his friends and which was calculated to produce a prolonged alienation of feeling: and both parties pledged themselves to unite their labors for the harmony of the Baptist denomination, and "so far as may be consistent with other obligations," for the prosperity of Mercer University. But it seems that the Board instead of trying to bury past differences were disposed to exhume them at the Convention at Americus and to bring into existence again that which was the original cause of all the differences. It should be borne in mind that neither Dr. Crawford nor the Board acknowledged that they had treated Mell with injustice. Until they did this, Mell and his friends would have stultified themselves if they had encouraged the Board to pursue a line of policy inaugurated by them in the beginning, and, as it then appeared, never abandoned by them.

But it may be said, Mell had attained to high office in the denomination, and he and his friends should have been willing for the sake of harmony, that Dr. Crawford should be recalled to another high office. To this it is answered that if Mell did attain to office in the denomination, it was in spite of the combined and uncompromising opposition of *all* the friends of Dr. Crawford. The election of Mell to the Presidency of the Convention formed no part of the conditions of the reconciliation at Augusta. This plea for

an equal division of the offices, implies that all the difficulty originated merely in the desire for the acquisition of office. Professor Mell always disclaimed this, and if he and his friends, merely because he had been elected to office, had turned round and supported that which they had opposed, they would have confessed in effect that Mell's enemies spoke the truth when they said that he raised all the excitement merely because he failed to secure high office. The fact that he had attained to the office he held in spite of the combined opposition of the Board of Trustees and other friends of Dr. Crawford, proved only that he was no longer apparently under the ban of the Baptist Denomination—not that his grievances at the hands of the Board had been redressed, or that he was converted to that policy which was the cause of all the difficulty in the beginning. In speaking of this occasion at the time Professor Mell said to his friends, "If the Board of Trustees, on their own responsibility, elect Dr. Crawford, we have nothing to say; but it is to be hoped that they will not, by causing this subject to be introduced into the Convention, seek to compel us to vote either for or against their proposition. It should be our policy, as we are in duty bound, to seek for the harmony of the denomination by refusing to vote either way. The charter grants to the Trustees the right to officer the Institution—theirs is the

duty and theirs the responsibility. If they proceed to settle open questions in accordance with the *spirit* of the reconciliation at Augusta, they will doubtless secure the sympathy and support of all parties in the denomination. If, however, they violate that spirit, in any way, the responsibility ought to rest with them. Should they, however, seek for support for their foregone conclusion, by causing a resolution to be introduced into the Convention, our policy should be *without excitement*, to move a substitute denying jurisdiction to the Convention;—if this be voted down, then we should permit them to carry their point *with profound silence on our part*—we not voting.”

CHAPTER VIII.

HONORS.

In 1856 he was appointed to the Presidency of Cherokee College, Georgia; Principal of the Columbus, Georgia, Male High School; Principal of the Baptist Female College at Talladega, Alabama; Pastor of the Talladega Baptist church; and Professor of Ancient Languages in the University of Georgia. He declined all of these positions except the last. He had decided to accept the Presidency of Cherokee college until it was shown him that the Institution would be a rival of Mercer University. And although he felt very keenly the unjust treatment of the Board of Trustees of Mercer University, still he knew that the great body of the friends of the college were not responsible for this wrong, and he was, therefore, unwilling to lift a hand against the Institution that he had served so long and faithfully and had learned to love.

Dr. Mell's great desire was to live and work in Georgia, his native State, and he, therefore, refused to consider all invitations that would call him to other States. He thought when he was dismissed from Mercer University that it

was due to himself to remain in Georgia and attain a greater rank than the one of which he had been deprived. Not to gratify an improper ambition, but because he felt that he had been greatly wronged and misjudged, and he was not satisfied until he was reinstated in the full confidence and esteem of the people of the Baptist Denomination.

Dr. Alonzo Church, President of Franklin College—afterwards the University of Georgia—wrote on November 22nd, 1856, the following letter to Prof. Mell requesting permission to present his name before the Board of Trustees for the Chair of Ancient Languages:

“DEAR SIR:

A mutual friend of yours and myself, as I understood him some time since, intimated to me that he would write to you upon a certain subject and that I would probably hear from him or yourself, ere this. Not having heard from either I am apprehensive that he may have written and the letter miscarried. The subject was the Professor of Ancient Languages in Franklin College, and whether you might be willing to accept the office if offered to you by the Board of Trustees, which has a meeting on the 10th of next month? I suppose you were aware of the state of things here during the past year or more? I think a large majority of the Board are convinced that there must be a change of officers to a considerable extent. I have little doubt that the Professor of Ancient Languages will be a new man. I think I know the feeling of the Board on that subject. My impression is also that you could be elected to the office if it can be certainly known that you will accept. As, however, you are so well known in this part of the country, and to

members of the Board, I do not suppose it would be necessary that you should do more than simply authorize some one to assure the Board that you would accept. With an energetic Faculty I have no doubt all things may be made pleasant in a short time, and the post of the Professor an eligible one to a man pleased with such profession.....

Yours with respect,

A. CHURCH."

Professor Mell, having signified his consent to the use of his name before the Board of Trustees of the University of Georgia, was elected on December 11th, 1856, to the Professorship of Ancient Languages, as the following letter from the Secretary indicates:

"UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA,

ATHENS, GA., December 12, 1856.

REV. P. H. MELL,

Penfield, Ga.

DEAR SIR:

On yesterday you were elected Professor of Ancient Languages in this Institution. The exercises of the college will be resumed on the 15th of January next.

I am respectfully

Your obedient servant,

ASBURY HULL,

Secretary."

Professor Mell accepted this position and entered upon the discharge of his duties in January, 1857. In accepting the chair he stipulated that its duties should not interfere with his relationship to the churches at Antioch and

Bairdstown; that he should be allowed to spend Sunday and Saturday of each week at these churches, and this arrangement was kept in force up to the time of his election to the Chancellorship of the University of Georgia in 1878.

He was elected President of the Georgia Baptist Convention in 1857, and, with the exception of the period when he was confined to his home by a serious spell of sickness, he was re-elected each year thereafter up to the time of his death in 1888. It is thus seen that in spite of the unjust treatment of the Board of Trustees of Mercer University he was being honorably vindicated by the people of Georgia. And, although the unkind feeling on the part of some members of this Board followed him through many long years thereafter, he steadily strengthened himself in the confidence of the people of Georgia until he occupied the most honorable place in the gift of the State.

In 1858 Furman University of South Carolina conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

In 1859 Dr. Church resigned the Presidency of the University of Georgia and also the Professorship of Ethics and Metaphysics and the Institution was reorganized at the meeting of the Board of Trustees in 1860. Dr. A. A. Lipscomb was elected Chancellor and Dr. P. H. Mell was elected to the chair of Ethics and Meta-

physics. At this meeting the following resolution was passed:

“Resolved.—That the office of Vice-Chancellor be established and that he be elected from one of the Professors best suited to the office; and that by way of compensation he have his house rent free. And in the absence of the Chancellor it shall be his duty to preside at all meetings of the Faculty and administer the laws and discipline of the college.”

On the same day that this resolution was passed Dr. Mell received the following communication from the Secretary of the Board:

“REV. P. H. MELL,
DEAR SIR:

Under the above resolution you were unanimously elected to the office of Vice-Chancellor, of which you will consider this an official announcement.

I am yours, etc.,

ASBURY HULL,
Secretary.”

This office Dr. Mell held until 1872, when it was abolished under the reorganization of the University at the time the Agricultural and Mechanical College became a part of the University system.

CHAPTER IX.

CONTROVERSIES.

In 1859 and 1860 Dr. Mell issued a series of articles on the subject of "Corrective Church Discipline" that aroused serious opposition from a number of writers. About this time the Baptist Denomination was passing through a critical period when a split in the ranks seemed imminent. The newspapers were full of articles on church polity and two opposing sides were formed; and bitterness and hard feeling were rapidly assuming prominent places in the argument. This state of affairs was brought about by the action of the Nashville church in withdrawing fellowship from Rev. J. R. Graves and a number of others for conduct tending to disrupt the church and destroy its independence and usefulness. There was much doubt in the minds of many over the South concerning the wisdom of this church in adopting such severe measures. Mr. Graves' friends were, of course, arrayed on one side and a number of writers were on the other. The question of the jurisdiction of the church was sprung in the Associations and also in the Southern Baptist Convention. Dr. R. B. C.

Howell, pastor of the Nashville church, and who had been for a term of years President of the Southern Baptist Convention, was antagonized by Graves' friends at the session in 1859 and his re-election contested on the grounds of his unbaptistic and partisan position in heading the move in the Nashville affair. He was, however, re-elected by a large majority, but resigned immediately after the ballot was announced so that there should be no disturbing elements in the deliberations of the Convention. Matters had become so serious because of the agitation of these questions relating to church government, and there seemed to be so many varied opinions concerning the fundamental doctrines of church polity as taught by the fathers, that a number of leading Baptists urged Dr. Mell to prepare a work on the subject that would give a clear conception of the relationship existing between the churches, and the status of the members in the church. "Corrective Church Discipline" was written in response to this request. It was first published in the shape of a series of articles in nearly all the Baptist papers in the South, and was afterwards republished in book form by the Southern Baptist Publication Society, and passed through several editions.

Although there was no reference in this work to any thing of a personal nature, still, coming as it did so soon after the Nashville trouble, and

touching, as it necessarily must, on all questions bearing on that affair, Mr. Graves and his friends assumed that the work was written to sustain this church at Nashville, and they soon filled the papers with severe criticisms antagonistic to Dr. Mell's position, and they secured the sympathy of nearly all the advocates of so-called "Landmarkism." One or two extracts are given below, taken from the papers of that date to show how bitter was some of this criticism, and how the work of "Corrective Church Discipline" was misconstrued and misapplied.

In the "Banner and Baptist" of May 3rd, 1860, appeared the following signed by "Correspondent":

PROF. MELL'S DESIGN.

It has occurred to one of your correspondents, Bro. Editor, that a deep design, hidden from all his readers, or nearly all, has stimulated Professor Mell to set before the world his extraordinary views of "Corrective Church Discipline."

What is the design? It seems to be this, in part: (one half of it need not be mentioned.) To produce on the minds of Southern Baptists a profound conviction that Dr. Howell and party did RIGHT in excluding from the Nashville church, J. R. Graves, and his brethren. No one can read the articles of the Professor without seeing that from first to last he aims a covert attack upon Graves. Now if he had come out and said what was his aim, many of his readers would more have appreciated his opinions. His attack seems to have been made from an ambush, and with design.

As to the fallacies of his doctrine, Prof. Worrell is revealing them step by step. But unfortunately the review

by Worrell began rather too late. It is devoutly to be wished that this had been otherwise. But then Bro. Mell forestalled him. How? By requesting as a special favor that no one should answer him till he was done! When would he get done? Just before the Georgia Baptist Convention should meet! and consequently, when the whole force of his views, without one pen-stroke of opposition, must have decided all his readers in his behalf.

Well enough did the Professor know the power of *ex parte* testimony. If he could only be heard, and no answer made, then the Convention—all Georgia Baptists, or a majority at least—would take refuge under his colors; so that should anything adverse, in any way relating to the “Nashville difficulty” occur, Dr. Mell, at the head of a vast majority, could triumphantly sustain Howell and his party.

It is not positively asserted that the above view is correct, but to the writer it seems so.

Prof. Mell is confessedly one of Georgia's greatest men. He has written much that will live long after he is in the house of silence. His views on many subjects would be acceptable to all his brethren. But when he takes the *wrong side*, in a matter of such grave importance, and attempts to ruin, or rather, to *seal* the ruin of a man whom Southern Baptists believe to be doing more for the cause of truth than any other man living, we can but tell our brother Mell that his efforts are vain.

CORRESPONDENT.

An Alabama correspondent wrote as follows in the “Landmark Banner & Cherokee Baptist,” June 21st, 1860:

AN EASY WAY TO DO WHAT CANNOT OTHERWISE BE DONE.

When a thing needs to be done, and there is but one way to do it, and *that* way is to *let it alone*; of course it ought to be let alone. This is *easy*.

Prof. Mell wrote a "Corrective Church Discipline," which was published by all the papers of a certain type in the land, and by some others, too, and finally by the Southern Baptist Publication Society. This newfangled discipline has been sawed, and split, skinned and dissected, and "driv up" by the logic and analysis of Prof. Worrell. "There it stands all naked and bare with its deformity exposed to the gaze of the passer-by." Cruel fellow, Worrell, you are!

But will not Prof. Mell come to the relief of his discipline? Will none of his publishers speak? Why certainly, we intend to reply to this young reviser. How? Why we are just going to reply by *letting him alone*. We are going to "ignore" his review, and by this trick we will try to make the people believe that it is not worthy a notice. What! condescend to write a rejoinder to A. S. Worrell? No ye credulous people don't you believe it, we want you to believe us when we tell you it is not fit to be read by you.

To be serious, why does Prof. Mell (and his publishing papers, most of them) so studiously avoid any allusion to Bro. Worrell's review? I see in a late number of the *Banner*, a notice by Prof. Mell of what Graves, Pendleton and Dayton, have written; I notice once in a while other references by friends of Mell's discipline to things said by writers who criticise Mell's views. But I observe nothing from Mell or any of *his* publishers concerning what Worrell has written. Prof. Mell says he is now willing for the case to go to the Jury, (the jury are deciding against him down here) therefore I suppose he does not expect to say more. Will they pretend that Worrell's review is not worth notice—that it would be a condescension to reply to him?

Now brethren, you can't stave Prof. W's review off this way! It has made its mark, and I doubt not you have all felt it. Is Prof. W. too young? Is his review too weak? But then remember that not a few of the strongest men in the denomination have pronounced it a triumphant expose of the fallacies of Mell. The people have eyes as well as

you. They can see. They can read—they, however, never would see but one side of the matter, were it left to those who endorse Mell's discipline. Another thought. Prof. Mell says he wrote his discipline with reference to *no case*, etc. I wish he had not said this. I have heard many others say that they wish he had not said this. We know a case or two and we have read his discipline. And we have heard something of the exigencies of the times.

I have a word to say about the Southern Bap. Pub. Society. Do they expect coolly to thus become partisans—the propagators of the interests of a party, and claim the support of the denomination? I recently had a conversation with a brother who has given that society seven hundred and fifty dollars. I judge he will never give them more. He regards this as a perversion—a prostitution of his money.

J. J. D. R.

Some of these articles were full of personalities that exhibited deep feeling, verging at times almost on the domain of hostility. Through all these attacks Dr. Mell preserved an unruffled temper, and throughout the entire series of articles avoided any reference to the unkind attacks made upon him. These criticisms following so closely also on the trouble with the authorities of Mercer University, some of his opponents in that fight arrayed themselves against him in this contest. In most instances names were signed to these articles but in some cases the attacks were made over anonymous signatures. In one case the attack was so stinging, persistent and unwarranted, that a reply was deemed necessary.

This party in order to sustain himself in the position assumed against that given in one of the articles on Corrective Church Discipline, quoted passages of Scripture in a manner quite reckless and marvelous to behold. He would take a certain verse or sentence from the Bible, isolate it from its connection, join it to another verse or sentence from some other part of the Bible isolated from its connection, and then draw his inferences. He seemed to be one of those men who did not appreciate the force of an argument when it was given. So Dr. Mell concluded to silence him with his own ammunition; and he therefore published in one of the papers the following reply.

“I see that my brother . . . , has attacked my last position and quoted certain Scripture to sustain his point. Now by my dear brother's course of reasoning I can prove anything from the Bible. I can prove that the brother ought to go and hang himself. Does not the Bible say ‘Judas Iscariot went and hanged himself’? (Matthew 27:5.) and does it not also say: ‘Go, and do thou likewise’? (Luke 10:37). ‘That thou doest, do quickly’? (John 13:27.) With the exception of the following short note nothing more was heard from that brother.

“I am ever willing to discuss principles with Christian courtesy, but since brother Mell is at his old game of *dodging*—at which he excels—I

need not pursue the subject further, as I have shown where he is. He also excels in drawing analogies: 'Judas went out and hanged *himself*.' By the way, if my good brother Mell thinks that the public cannot see that he is dodging, he greatly mistakes the public."

Some leading Baptists did not agree in all respects with the principles enunciated in these articles on church government, and were candid enough to publish their views on the subject, but their arguments were free from all personalities and were dignified and courteous.

When a number of the articles from Dr. Mell's pen had made their appearance in the papers, Prof. A. S. Worrell of Talladega, Alabama, began to write a "Review of Corrective Church Discipline" which was published in the "Tennessee Baptist," "Landmark Banner," and some other papers. This "Review" was intended to be a conclusive answer to all the points elucidated by Dr. Mell. A demand was made on the part of Prof. Worrell and his friends that this "Review" be published under the same cover with "Corrective Church Discipline." (The article already given, signed by "J. J. D. R.," is a specimen of these demands.) The Board of Managers of the Southern Publication Society, however, refused to comply with this request.

Rev. B. F. Tharpe of Georgia became quite indignant at this refusal on the part of the Pub-

lication Society and published the following article. This production from Mr. Tharpe will indicate how high the excitement ran in those days when leading men of the denomination all over the South arrayed themselves under the names of "Graves' Men" and "Anti-Graves' men."

"If a plain sense of justice would not compel the brethren at Charleston to publish both sides of a matter involving so much consequence, the errors in the first work" (Corrective Church Discipline) "presented should not have escaped their notice, but should have met their prompt condemnation. They greatly mistake the Baptists if they suppose that, after this temporary excitement passes away, they will receive such works as standard. Such works will die with the excitement which produced them. But there is another thing which will not die in the memory of those who should have been the friends of the Society. They will ever remember that a society which should have promoted the interests of truth has been prostituted to partisan, if not to personal ends . . . I ask you, what can men, holding to my views, do as to the rottenness of all taught by the work in question which could have called it forth, do relative to this Society? . . . For my own part, I am disappointed, mortified at the part which the brethren in Charleston have thought proper to pursue. And I am sorry that I have even one dollar in the Society which is perverted to partisan ends, and is daily used in reproducing and circulating error, both radical and subversive of the great interests of the church."

As a matter of interest in this connection, and probably explaining in some degree the animus of the above production, I will state that Mr.

B. F. Tharpe was a member of the Board of Trustees of Mercer University, and was present at the meeting in 1855 when Professor Mell's connection with the University was severed. Mr. Tharpe voted in the affirmative. The publication of Professor Mell's "An Exposition of Recent Events," that fully exposed the *ex parte* action of this Board, and the after development of the case before the Baptist State Convention, were not conducive to cordiality from most of the members of this Board; and throughout the remaining lives of the movers of this great injustice at Penfield there continued a feeling of unfriendliness towards Professor Mell. Mr. Tharpe was not an exception to the rule.

In reply to the strictures of Mr. Tharpe, as above quoted, the Southern Baptist Publication Society responded:

"The Committee on Publication with one accord say . . . that they accepted Professor Mell's work because they thought it an able treatise, and in the main correct, and declined Professor Worrell's because they considered it unworthy of publication, and that their decisions were wholly uninfluenced by partisan feeling The truth is, if Professor Mell has ever written or spoken one word in relation to the Nashville affairs, we have not seen or heard of it There is then nothing, either in the book or in his course before or since writing it, to support the charge that it was written for a partisan purpose." (See Southern Baptist published at Charleston on October 6th, 1860.)

In the Christian Index of October 17th, 1860, appeared the following, written, no doubt, by some member of the publication committee of the Southern Baptist Publication Society, although not signed by the writer's name.

"Brother Tharp is amazed that the Board ever consented to publish Professor Mell's treatise—that they did not detect the "rotteness" of its teachings—and that they should have ventured to send it forth with their approbation and endorsement. I am not going to discuss the ripeness or "rotteness" of this book. I only wish to say here, in response, that the Society does not pretend to endorse all the minute views of the works which it issues, and which, upon the whole, it may regard as safe and useful for the denomination. Very likely there may be opinions enunciated in Dr. Dagg's Theology and in Dr. Mallary's books, which would not accord with the views of the publication committee The truth about "Corrective Church Discipline" is, I suppose, something like this: Professor Mell is an author of established reputation, and, until recently, of unassailed orthodoxy. Our Society had published several of his books, and was always glad to obtain a work from his pen. It was sure to be well received in the powerful State of Georgia, and not to be suspected of "rotteness." This last work of his was offered us for publication. Its publication was earnestly called for by warm and judicious friends of the Society. Perhaps not a very severe inquisition was given to it by the committee. It was promptly accepted, and I have yet to discover any just grounds of complaint against this action."

Dr. Mell in reply to all these criticisms said:

"If my little book on Discipline is properly written, it is applicable in principle to any case that has occurred in the past, or that may happen in the future."

He was open to conviction and was ever ready to acknowledge his error when properly brought before him and proven. The following extracts from an article written for the *Christian Index* in the issue for September the 6th, 1860, prove this position and at the same time show how firm he was in maintaining what he considered to be truth and principle. As will be noticed in the comments of the editor, this article was an introduction to a series called forth by criticisms made by Dr. J. S. Baker on "Corrective Church Discipline."

AMICABLE DISCUSSION.

Below we present a letter just received from Dr. Mell. From it our readers will perceive that Brother Mell is willing to discuss in the *Index*, the sentiments advanced in his *Church Discipline*: and as he and Dr. Baker disagree, we must look for able and absorbingly interesting presentation and support of opposite views.—While it is really to be hoped that, as Brother Mell says, their differences will be narrowed down, on a plain exhibition of them, yet, as Brother Baker absolutely dissents from what Brother Mell sees no reason to "modify in the slightest degree," we are warranted in looking for an exciting and edifying crossing of lances

[For the *Christian Index*.]

I am gratified to see in the *Index* of the 29th ult., the promise of Brother Baker to give in a series of articles, the points of difference, in part, between himself and me on the subject of *Church Discipline*. From Brother B.'s character and professions the public are prepared to expect nothing but candor. It gives me pleasure to know that the opportunity will be afforded me—should I wish

to avail myself of it—to discuss the sentiments of my book with one whose antecedents qualify him to view the subjects in a light not partisan, and who is competent not only to furnish but to appreciate an argument.

While Brother Baker considers my position, “in the main, correct,” he thinks I have “fallen into a few radical errors.”—These, on the principles of fairness and courtesy laid down in his preliminary article, I hope he will faithfully point out, and unsparingly expose. And he need not be afraid of touching my sensibilities by such exposure. If truth be all that I am seeking, whatever of mortification I may feel at the necessity of abandoning a position because it is proved to be wrong, will be more than compensated by the joy I shall experience when I attain, in whatever way, to that which is right.

Thus far, I have seen nothing which causes me to modify my views in the slightest degree. After all that has been written against my little book, if I had to furnish it for the press anew, I would not cross a t nor dot an i. But brethren as candid and as competent as I, differ from me on one or two points. Candid and courteous discussion is the way alone, then, in which we can be brought to agree.

From what Brother B. has already published on the subject, I am inclined to think, that, on comparison of notes, the public will find there is but little that divides us. One point of difference he has indicated in his preliminary article. By his unqualified endorsement of Brother Shaver's arguments, I understand that he joins issue with me when I say that excluded members must be restored, if at all, by the church excluding. This question ought to be discussed with calmness. There is no reason why “Nashville parties” or partisans, on the one side or the other, should feel any special interest in it. The denomination may decide for or against the views I present, and neither of those parties will be benefited or injured. Mr. Graves and his associates have not been received into the membership of another church, but claim that they have never been excluded, and that they

constitute the original "First Church at Nashville." I am happy to know, then, that in discussing THIS question we find it unembarrassed by any complication with existing cases of discipline in this latitude.

Brother Baker will, of course, endeavor to show the fallacy of the argument I have already given, and, if I see occasion to reply, he can rejoin, and, if he introduces no new matter, the discussion can close with his rejoinder.

P. H. MELL.

Dr. Mell was a staunch defender of Baptist principles, as he understood them, and all through his life he never let an opportunity pass to speak for truth against error. But in every instance he was courteous and gentle, yet firm and unswerving in maintaining the truth. Although his keen sense of the ludicrous was often given an opportunity for exercise, and his ability to wield the weapon of sarcasm was powerful and effective, still it was seldom the case that he permitted his pen to take such advantage of his opponent. His language, when dealing with theological questions, was always free from personalities, and whenever it became necessary to mention any one's name in the course of the discussion, it was invariably done in a way so as not to give offense nor wound the most delicate sensibilities. His mind took such vigorous hold of a subject, and his deductions and conclusions were always so clear and logical, that he was constantly called upon to answer questions on church government and Baptist usage, from all

portions of the country. Sometimes his answers were gratifying to the questioners, but as often the replies carried with them conclusions that knocked the foundations from under the confident seeker after truth. The following letter is furnished to illustrate this attribute of fearlessness in his character to write the truth, let the consequences be what they may. It will be also noticed how polite and considerate he was even while giving adverse criticism.

“ATHENS, GA., Dec. 22d, 1880.

LOUIS H. EVERTS, ESQ.,

PUBLISHER,

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

DEAR SIR:

I have examined with some care Part I. of “The Baptist Encyclopaedia,” which you were kind enough to send me. A work of this kind judiciously executed is a desideratum; and I stand ready to give all the aid in my power to making it a complete success. True, there are special difficulties in the way of its satisfactory execution; and one would hazard something to endorse it unreservedly before examining critically every article in the completed work. The Baptists, with great unanimity, hold to the essential articles of their faith and practice; but there are a few deductions drawn from their principles which are warmly advocated by some and as warmly opposed by others, and there are also some exotic usages which a few eccentric people endeavor to engraft upon our practice against which the great body of our people protest. Now how can I know in advance that the Encyclopaedia will be free from these disputed and eccentric things? Unfortunately Part I. furnishes a forcible example to illustrate my meaning. I cannot endorse the article: “Admission of Members into the Church;” for

1st—I am glad to say, I never heard before of such impossible usage in our churches as that given—viz: that the pastor formally “instructs” an applicant for baptism and church-membership “in the great doctrines of the Trinity, election, the offices of the Three Sacred Persons, depravity, regeneration, atonement, justification, providence, final perseverance and believing prayer”!!! What hope is there here for the young or the uneducated believer in Jesus? Those who enter Baptist churches are not admitted as doctrinal proficient, but as learners in the school of Christ; and the only ground of their baptism and subsequent admission is the evidence they give that they have experienced “repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.”

2nd—I could not endorse it, again, because of the statement in the last sentence, unnecessarily made, and without words of disapprobation—viz: “In a few churches, the pastor, just before giving the hand of fellowship, places his hands upon the candidate’s head, and tenderly prays for him”!! This is ritualism, not Baptist usage; and the act itself is a kind of bastard “confirmation.” A work of this kind, coming out under such auspices and, in the main, so nobly executed, will be authority of the highest kind. Whatever it gives, without dissent, as Baptist usage, will be considered as legitimate and unobjectionable. Excuse me for saying, the sentence of this article, quoted above, tends to increase the number of these “few churches” and pastors, who are not Baptists in fact, and who ought to be encouraged to leave us as speedily as possible, and go to those to whom they belong.

I am not asked to give advice. If I had been, my recommendation in this connection would have been as follows: Make no reference to disputed and eccentric things. If though, for any reason, you feel under obligations to include them, assign them to a place by themselves, in an avowedly unendorsed Appendix, as to a denominational pest house, or Botany Bay.

There is one other blemish, of slight importance though, and not calculated to mislead anybody, but objectionable

because offensive to large numbers, and even to some of your co-laborers. Whenever in the work reference is made to the unfortunate conflict between the sections, in admirable taste, it speaks of it as "the war" or "the late war," etc. In giving the interesting sketch of Dr. M. B. Anderson, though, it violates this good taste by using the phraseology of a party politician and calling it "the war of the Rebellion." Now I honor Dr. Anderson for bravely and nobly sustaining his convictions of right and duty, and I thank the writer of the sketch for emphasizing his course in this connection. But he imposes a hardship and an impossibility upon all like me, when he expects us to endorse, or even to receive without protest, a work that unnecessarily insults us.

Now, in frankly writing as I have, I am afraid I have given offense. My intentions though are of a contrary character. I am trying to aid. I learned with great satisfaction in the beginning that the work was to be undertaken. Dr. Cathcart did me the honor to solicit my services, as his co-laborer for Georgia; and it was on my recommendation that Rev. S. Boykin consented to give his valuable services in that connection. No one will rejoice more than I at the satisfactory and successful completion of the great work

Wishing Dr. Cathcart eminent success in his great enterprise, I subscribe myself

Yours very respectfully.

P. H. MELL."

CHAPTER X.

AMUSING INCIDENTS.

There was a humorous side to Dr. Mell's character that came to the surface at times to the great amusement and entertainment of his friends. Meeting with people in all walks of life many opportunities were presented for the display of this trait, and his keen sense of the ludicrous was often aroused by the striking oddities and peculiarities of human nature. He was as ready to laugh at a good joke on himself as at the expense of another. However, he never permitted this propensity to carry him to extremes. He knew when to laugh at his friend so as not to give offense and when to suppress his risibles. Nevertheless he never forgot a good joke, and could tell an anecdote with great relish.

Play upon words was a great power with him also, and some of his puns were greatly appreciated by his friends and acquaintances.* In

*A friend writing of him in the "Religious Herald" says: "He is regarded as the prince of good fellows, making the youngest and humblest of his brethren feel perfectly at home in his company, and is the very life of our ministerial gatherings at associations. His fondness of interesting and laughable anecdotes exceeds that of any ministers I have ever known, and his manner of relating them is inimitable."

illustration of this side of his character the following few incidents are given among many that might be related.

It was the custom with Professor Mell to take summer trips with some members of the college classes under his charge to points of interest in northern Georgia, and some times with friends to the sea coast to spend several weeks in fishing. On a trip of this character through the wire grass regions of Georgia and in company with a friend, he stopped one evening at a small cabin to seek shelter for the night. The woman who met them at the door refused for a time to take them in on the plea that her husband was absent and she was unwilling to take in strangers. But she was assured that they would be content to take the fare she was able to give them, without putting her to extra trouble, provided they could find shelter for themselves and horses. There was only one room to the house, and the woman was compelled, therefore, to stretch a sheet across a corner of the room behind which she put down a pallet for the men. In the preparation of the supper she used but one cooking utensil, and that a frying-pan, for cooking the meat, then the bread and afterwards the coffee. When they had eaten their supper and the gentlemen had smoked their pipes, the woman warmed some water in the frying-pan and asked the travelers if they wished to wash

their feet before retiring; but they declining she remarked that she could not rest well without bathing her feet, and began immediately to wash them in the pan to the great horror and disgust of the gentlemen. This revelation was quite unpleasant to them and next morning they breakfasted only on roasted potatoes and water.

At one time Professor Mell formed a party consisting of his family, several ladies and gentlemen friends and took a trip to the mountains of North Georgia by private conveyance. On the way up they passed through a fashionable watering place. The ladies of the party insisted upon having the curtains of the wagon pulled down so that they would not be seen in their dust-stained apparel by the people of the village.

Professor Mell was walking by the side of the wagons as they drove along the main street in front of the hotel, and some well dressed young men standing on the porch, seeing the cavalcade, decided to have some fun out of the green countryman, as they were pleased to call Professor Mell. They walked up to him in a swaggering manner, and one among their number called out so that everybody could distinctly hear: "Look here, old fellow, what's this you've got in these wagons, whiskey?" "No, sir," said Professor Mell, assuming as far as possible the role of a countryman, because he had overheard

the remark made by the young men on the hotel porch, "It is live stock." "Is it for sale?" responded the young man. "Yes, sir, if you will pay me my price for it." "Let me see it," said the young fellow, and going to the nearest wagon, he lifted the curtain and thrust his head in among the ladies, who were blissfully ignorant of what was going on outside. As the curtain was raised and the strange face appeared, a chorus of shrieks greeted the inquisitive young man and he jumped back as if he had been shot, with amazement and consternation depicted on countenance and attitude. A burst of laughter pealed forth from the porch as the full situation dawned upon the crowd assembled there. The young men walked off crestfallen. Professor Mell called after them: "Wont you buy some of my live stock, gentlemen?" The tables were so well turned on the young men that they became satisfied the "old fellow" was not so green as he pretended to be; so they interviewed one of the drivers who was feeding his horses while the party were eating their dinners and he informed them that the apparent countryman was Prof. P. H. Mell, of Mercer University. They were so much ashamed of their conduct to one so well known and respected as Professor Mell that they sought him out and apologized for what they had done. He laughed at them heartily and forgave them. Professor Mell was

full of humor and enjoyed a joke to the fullest extent, yet at the same time he knew when to stop so as not to hurt the sensitive feelings of any one. Throughout his life he was kind and considerate to all. He had the faculty of placing himself in perfect sympathy with the company around him provided their views did not conflict with his opinions of what was right and proper. Young men, therefore, became very much attached to him and often came to him for advice. His house was frequently visited by people from the more humble walks of life who were made to feel at perfect ease in his presence because he adapted himself to their circumstances and understanding. Some of his warmest friends were men who were ill at ease in what is commonly called fashionable circles. At the same time his dignified bearing, great learning, affability and genial character made him scores of strong friends among the great men of the South. The following may be given as an interesting illustration of his ability to adapt himself to his company.

One of the most successful pastoral visits he ever made was during a rabbit hunt. Some little distance from a church at which he was preaching there was a community in which the young people refused to attend religious services. There were grown persons who had never been inside of a church. One of Mr. Mell's dea-

cons lived just on the edge of this community, and he was requested to organize a rabbit hunt and get all the young men of the settlement to join it, and to have a gun ready for his pastor, but not to let any one know that he was coming so as to make it appear that his arrival was accidental. The deacon demurred to this plan at first but when Mr. Mell informed him what he intended to do the deacon entered heartily into his plans. The hunt was organized and proved to be a great success. Mr. Mell came on at the proper time and a little persuasion was used before he consented to go with the party. He became thoroughly acquainted with the young men, and his success in shooting rabbits was so fine, because he was a good marksman, that the boys admired him and soon became quite intimate with him. He made himself thoroughly agreeable and pleasant to them all. There was not a word said, however, concerning religion. Every body returned from the hunt delighted, and on the following Sabbath a number of these people, for the first time, came to hear Mr. Mell preach. They came regularly after that and before the year was out more than two-thirds of the young people of this settlement had been baptized.

He was present once at a Justice Court, and while waiting for the appearance of the Justice he was standing under the shade of a tree near

where a group of men were drinking from a jug of whiskey. They asked him to drink with them but he politely declined. Another man coming up just at this time he was also asked to indulge, and taking the jug he responded: "Certainly, I will, and I've got Scripture for it, too. Don't the Bible say, Be temperate in all things? and whiskey being *something* how can I be temperate in it unless I drink some?" Saying this he looked at the Doctor with a triumphant air and a wink at the "boys." Dr. Mell, good naturedly said: "I suppose, gentlemen, that was intended for me, as I was the only one to refuse the drink. Now, I have just two objections to that doctrine. In the first place there is no such passage in the Bible. And in the second place suppose the Apostle had said, Be ye temperate in all things, are you going to construe it in the way just given? If you do you will have to bite a piece out of that jug as well as drink some of the whiskey, for jug-biting is just as much "a thing" as whiskey-drinking. And then, see what a chapter of accidents you will be in. You will have to go through life biting a piece out of every hedge you come to; nibbling the bark of every tree you go by; drinking some out of every mud puddle you pass; and, finally, my dear sir, you will have to bite a piece out of every little dog's tail you pass on the road." The laugh was turned on the would-be Bible scholar.

Reverence for the Sabbath was a strong feature in Dr. Mell's character, and he avoided, as far as possible, any inclination to violate its sacred prerogatives. The following incident furnishes a striking illustration of this fact.

A number of years ago, before there was a railroad between Chattanooga and Nashville, the Southern Baptist Convention convened in the latter city. On Saturday night, before the meeting of the Convention, a number of delegates, among them Dr. Mell, were consulting on the train, just before it reached Chattanooga, concerning the advisability of taking the Sunday morning stage, or remaining in Chattanooga until Monday morning. If they stayed until Monday morning there was a strong probability of arriving in Nashville too late for the opening exercises of the Convention. It was decided by all, except Dr. Mell and one other delegate, that it would be best to take the Sunday morning's stage. These two concluded not to travel on the Sabbath.

Sunday opened clear and beautiful and the party started off in the highest spirits, with the brightest prospects of a quick and successful journey. They had not been gone many hours, however, before it began raining and continued until late at night. Early next morning a special conveyance drove up to the door of the hotel in Chattanooga at which Dr. Mell and his friend

were stopping, and put out a passenger and his baggage. This carriage was from Nashville and the driver expected to return immediately with it empty. Learning of this fact, Dr. Mell contracted with him to take them for a small sum, and they left some time before the regular stage started. A little over half way between the cities they passed the Sunday's stage, broken down, with the passengers out in the mud in a deplorable condition. These unfortunate men did not reach Nashville until Dr. Mell and his friend had succeeded in obtaining comfortable quarters and the Convention had been organized.

One Saturday morning he intended to meet an engagement at one of his churches; his watch was out of fix and it was considerably later than the watch indicated. He started to walk to the depot, one mile distant, as was his custom; and proceeding in a leisurely manner he had gone about half the distance when he heard the engine whistle blow. This made him uneasy but his watch still reassured him. He, however, quickened his pace, and, as he was moving hurriedly along he met an old negro man who said:

"Sho, Marster, yer aint gwine to take der train?"

"Yes," said Dr. Mell, "I expect to do so if possible. Why do you ask?"

"Why, Lord, Marster, hit done gone; look yonder."

Looking in the direction indicated by the negro's hand, sure enough the train was fast moving out of sight. Dr. Mell involuntarily quickened his steps and actually ran a few feet before recollecting himself, when he turned with much dignity and slowly walked home. While walking off, to his amusement, he heard the darky exclaim:

“My Gord-a-mighty! tryin’ to run down er train er kyars an’ hit done got two miles de start er ’im!”

He used to travel on this same road to his churches frequently in company with a Methodist minister who also preached to a church near Antioch. This minister was a widower and Dr. Mell often teased him about the ladies. One Saturday, as they were going down together, and in the presence of several other gentlemen, he requested him to preach the next day from the text: “This widow troubleth me.” The following Monday, returning to Athens, some one asked the Methodist divine if he preached from the text furnished him by Dr. Mell. “Oh no,” said he, “I took the text: ‘How long halt ye between two opinions.’” “Ah,” said Dr. Mell, “I did not know there were two of them.”

CHAPTER XI.

THE WAR.

Dr. Mell was a strong sympathizer with the cause of the South, and at the opening of the war in 1861 he was among the first to offer his services to his country for her defense. In the early part of 1861 a company was formed in Athens Ga., called the "Mell Volunteers," and afterwards changed to the name of "The Mell Riflemen," in honor of Dr. Mell, and he was unanimously elected to command it. He accepted the office and at once commenced drilling the men for active service. Benjamin Mell, his eldest son, who had just graduated from the University with the first honor, joined this company as a private. Application was made to the State Government for commissions for the officers and arms for the men. In response to this, Governor Joseph E. Brown sent the following commission to Dr. Mell:—

"STATE OF GEORGIA:

By his excellency Joseph E. Brown,
Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy
of this State and of the Militia thereof.

To P. H. Mell, Greeting:—

We, reposing special trust and confidence in your patriotism, valor, conduct and fidelity, do,

by these presents, constitute and appoint you Captain of the Mell Riflemen of the Militia formed for the defense of the State, and for repelling every hostile invasion thereof. You are, therefore, carefully and diligently to discharge the duty of Captain as aforesaid, by doing and performing all manner of things thereunto belonging. And we do strictly charge and require all Officers and Privates under your command, to be obedient to your orders as such. And you are to observe and follow such orders and directions, from time to time, as you shall receive from me, or a future Governor and Commander-in-Chief of this State for the time being, or any other of your superior officers, in pursuance of the trust reposed in you. This commission to continue in force during your usual residence within the county to which you belong, unless removed by sentence of Court Martial, or by the Governor, on the address of two-thirds of each branch of the General Assembly.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the Executive Department at the Capitol in Milledgeville this the 28th day of June in the year of our Lord one thousand and eight hundred and sixty-one, and of the Independence of the State of Georgia the eighty-fifth.

By the Governor.

HENRY C. WAYNE,
Adjutant General."

Attached to this document was the following form of oath:

"I, P. H. Mell, do solemnly swear that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the State of Georgia, and to the utmost of my power and ability, observe, conform to, support and defend the Constitution thereof, without any reservation or equivocation whatsoever, and the Constitution of the Confederate States. P. H. MELL.

Sworn to and subscribed before me, this the 5th day of July, 1861. JOHN KILPATRICK, J. P."

“EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,
MILLEDGEVILLE, GA., July 1st, 1861.

CAPTAIN P. H. MELL,
ATHENS, GA.

SIR:

Herewith you have the commissions of yourself as Captain and of W. W. Lumpkin and John B. Cobb as 1st and 2nd Lieutenants and of R. H. Goodman as Ensign of the Mell Riflemen. You will please state in writing, directed to this office immediately, whether you accept the commission, and if so whether you have taken and subscribed the oath thereto attached.

Very Respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

HENRY C. WAYNE,
Adjutant General.”

Preparations were made to carry the Mell Riflemen to the front in Virginia, and the company was assigned to Cobb's Legion. But on the 6th of July, 1861, Lurene Howard Mell, the wife of Dr. Mell, died leaving a large family of children, some of whom were quite young. The father, therefore, was forced to resign his commission in order that his family might not be left helpless and destitute. In the death of Mrs. Mell a noble, Christian woman was lost to society, the husband was bereft of an affectionate companion and sympathizing wife and there was a gloom cast over the household that time only was able to soften. Dr. A. A. Lipscomb, Chancellor of the University, in speaking of

Mrs. Mell shortly after her death among other things said:

‘A beautiful character in early girlhood, fond of such pursuits as elevate and refine the opening heart, and cherishing those tastes that impart a genial glow to youthful affections, she grew up in the quiet of home with a steadiness of purpose, a serene thoughtfulness, a dignity of spirit, above her years. On reaching womanhood her mind expanded with those views and feelings that experience and responsibility never fail to bring to a disciplined nature. She entered on life’s duties as aims and aspirations to cultivate her inward being no less than as obligations to be conscientiously discharged, accepting her sphere as a divine gift and daily finding the smile of God and the peace of Christ in all its anxieties and tasks. For her clearness and force of intellect; for the gentle charms that add such grace to the intercourse of ordinary life; for the inbred sympathy that gives to manners the rank of a virtue and sheds such a welcome light over human fellowships; for these we admired her. But we loved her for qualities higher and nobler. She was a woman of lofty principles, possessing a sense of truth and right that was a law to her thoughts as well as actions, abiding firmly in her convictions and tenacious of them as fixed rules of action, and unselfishly striving to make her existence a benediction and a joy to all around her. Such were the qualities of character that bound our hearts to her while living and drew from them this humble tribute now that she is dead.

“For some twenty-five years she was a consistent and faithful member of the Baptist church, appreciating in the fulness of her heart its institutions, prizing its communion and devoted to its interests. Her religious experience was uniform and progressive. Marked by no violent transitions, by no abrupt impulses, it was singularly equable and harmonious, rising as life advanced into higher views, deepening into an intenser trust, swelling into a

richer joy, but always characterized by those traits that give stability and growth to Christian culture. Few persons have had less warning of approaching death, but she was found ready. The summons came at midnight but her lamp was burning and in its light she trod the dark valley."

Before the expiration of the year the Mell Riflemen were ordered to report to Lee's Army in Virginia for immediate duty. On September 14th, 1862, at the Battle of Antietam in Maryland, Benjamin Mell, who had been promoted to the rank of Sergeant, was severely wounded while his company was defending the Pass at Crampton's Gap. He was left helpless on the field and captured by the Federals, who placed him in a church in the village of Burketsville, near by where they had made a temporary hospital. A gentleman, Mr. T. S. Lee, who resided in the neighborhood, obtained permission to remove him to his house, and there the kindest and best attention was shown him. Dr. West, an excellent physician, put forth every effort that skill could devise to overcome the evil effects of the wound but to no avail. It was mortal, and three weeks after he was shot on the field of battle the young soldier breathed his last. The sacrifices this family made for an entire stranger, and the disinterested kindness they extended to him throughout his severe illness, have endeared them beyond expression to his relatives. Miss

Mary D. Lee, daughter of Mr. T. S. Lee, who was untiring in her attentions at the bedside of the dying young man, and who did everything that gentle hands could do to relieve his suffering, wrote to Dr. Mell the following letter announcing the death of his son:

“MY DEAR SIR:

It is my painful task to announce to you the death of your brave and interesting son, Benjamin Mell. You have perhaps heard that he was wounded in the battle of Crampton Gap, which was fought on the 14th of September, on a mountain pass about three miles from the house of my father, Mr. T. S. Lee. He was taken to Burketsville (a village close by) by the Federal authorities, where he remained under the care of the Federal surgeons for about a week and was very kindly treated by them. My father then obtained permission to remove him to our house. You may feel assured, my dear sir, that he received every care and attention that it was in our power to bestow. He was attended daily by two excellent physicians. My parents, my brothers and myself nursed him day and night, but unfortunately our care was unavailing to preserve his life. The wound which terminated his life, struck his arm and passed from that into his side and around his back. His sufferings were very great, but he bore them with the utmost patience and fortitude, not the slightest murmur or complaint ever escaped him. He seemed to be most grateful for any little kindness or attention that was in our power to bestow. His great desire was to see his dear father and sisters and brothers of whom he often spoke with great affection, and to whom he desired me to send his tender love. He was perfectly resigned to die and he felt he was prepared. He read his Bible very often and said to my mother and myself that he prayed always. He said he wished his coat to be sent to you, that his father might see where he had been

wounded, and that he had not disgraced his dear father, but had behaved bravely. He expired on Monday, the 20th of October, about eleven o'clock a.m., and was buried the next day in the churchyard of the Episcopal church in this neighborhood. The Rev. Mr. Trapnell performed the service over his remains. His name is marked on the headpiece above his grave so that it can be recognized hereafter. We have no opportunity of sending you his clothes and the other little articles which he had about him, but they shall be carefully preserved to deliver to you at some future time, but I enclose to you a lock of his hair. I will keep a part of the hair for fear that this letter should miscarry. We shall be most happy, dear sir, to see you at any time, and if there is any thing that I have unintentionally forgotten to mention about your son only let me know and I shall be most happy to inform you. We feel great sympathy for you in the loss of your brave and interesting son.

Yours most respectfully,

MARY D. LEE."

Dr. Mell replied to this kind letter as follows:

"UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA.

ATHENS, June 13th, 1866.

MY DEAR MISS LEE:

Your kind letter of the 20th of October, 1862, reached me, I cannot say how. It came to hand after a long delay, and was delivered to me by the Engineer of the railroad here, who received it from a passenger on a connecting line, he knew not whom. It had been preceded by a letter from Dr. West, which reached me in a way alike undefinable. This letter arrived while I was absent in Virginia making fruitless efforts to get access to the bedside of my wounded boy. The tidings had reached here, with all the appearance of authenticity, that he had died on the field of battle, and I did not learn to the contrary until the return of Captain Camack four weeks

after. God knows how my heart yearned towards my son, and what strenuous efforts I made to get to his side. He was the pride of my heart. But the will of the Lord be done! I did not learn of his death until I returned from Virginia: and ever since I have been living under the shadow of a great sorrow . . . I have long desired to write you and express to you and your father's family my deep gratitude for your kindness to my noble boy. First the progress of the war prevented; then the want of mail facilities here, and finally when this want was removed, my poor heart, longing as it was to unburden itself of expression of the gratitude it felt, sunk at the idea of recurring to a loss so irreparable; and shrunk from a task which necessarily filled it with unutterable anguish. Some sorrows are assuaged by silence. The arrival through Dr. Fuller of the little relics of my son, preserved and forwarded by you, however, chides my delay, and demands that I should nerve myself for the task. I thank God for the evidence that my boy did his duty; that he bore his sufferings with manly fortitude: and that he died in the hope of immortality. It is no small consolation too to know that he did not find an indiscriminate grave on the field of carnage: but that kind hands closed his eyes and sympathizing hearts followed him to Christian burial, and perhaps dropped a tear, (ah me!) over his premature grave. Perhaps I shall recover pecuniary resources time enough to remove his body; but if not, the Archangel's trump will awake him as easily under the hospitable sod of Maryland as though he was sleeping by the side of his sainted mother here.

Be pleased to present my gratitude to Dr. West and the other physicians who attended him in his illness, and be assured, my dear Miss Lee, that I shall ever retain you and your father's family in grateful and affectionate remembrance.

Praying God's blessing on you and yours, I remain

Yours with gratitude,

P. H. MELL."

Dr. Mell was married the second time to Miss Eliza E. Cooper, in Scriven county, Georgia, December 24th, 1861. By this marriage there were born six children, five of whom are now living. Mrs. Mell is residing in Athens, Ga.

On the 30th of May, 1863, the citizens of Athens and vicinity met in convention to devise some plan for defending the northern part of the State of Georgia against a threatened invasion. At this meeting it was "Resolved that the people be organized into companies of cavalry, artillery and infantry, and that Prof. P. H. Mell be requested to command such companies with the rank of Colonel. Resolved that in view of the Governor's Proclamation, the Colonel, P. H. Mell, be instructed to proceed at the earliest day practicable to Milledgeville for the purpose of procuring commissions from the Governor for himself and all other officers under him. On motion of W. L. Mitchell a committee of three was appointed by the chair to wait on Prof. P. H. Mell and request him to accept the appointment this day made. The chair appointed W. L. Mitchell, J. Billups, and R. D. Moore."

In connection with this occasion an amusing incident is copied here from some recently published reminiscences of that time.

"When the Federals began to make raids into Georgia during the war, many of the towns organized 'home guards' for their protection. When the time came to

make preparation for emergencies and for active duty, the question of a commander was broached. Three of the most discreet and bravest citizens of Athens were appointed to put things in good shape, and to suggest the name of a suitable man to command the force.

When they met in consultation, and the question was asked, who shall it be? one of the committee, a man of very decided convictions, and of very positive manner, replied, 'I am for Mell.' 'Why,' said another of the committee, 'he knows nothing about military affairs.' 'I don't care for that,' said the other, 'I am for Mell anyhow. For a man who can manage four hundred Baptists can do anything.' So Dr. Mell was elected Colonel."

He accepted the Colonelcy, and was duly commissioned by the Governor. He addressed the people in many places in Northern Georgia, urging them to form companies and co-operate with the citizens of Athens in the defense of the country against invasion. The Chancellor, Faculty and nearly all the students of the University joined this regiment, and college exercises were suspended until the close of the war.

Colonel Mell was in camp with his regiment at Rome, Georgia, and also at Savannah during the remainder of the war, and was mustered out at its close and returned to his home in Athens.

A comrade in arms has said that "Colonel Mell, with sword in hand, made as fine a military commandant, and exhibited as much executive talent as when, with gavel in hand, he sat presiding as a parliamentarian over a deliberative body."

A detachment of Sherman's army was stationed at Athens just after the war and the people of that city will long hold them in remembrance for the many violent attacks made on both person and property. General Lee had surrendered a few days before and the Federal soldiers were riding through the streets of Athens in every direction, firing their guns and insulting the citizens, although it was well known by them that the war had ended, and there was no resistance offered to the occupancy of the city. Dr. Mell was sitting on his porch when one of these soldiers rode up to the gate and asked him to come out saying he wished to speak to him. Upon complying with the request the fellow demanded of him his watch and all other valuables he had on his person upon the ground that he was a prisoner. This demand was emphasized by a gun pointed at his breast. Dr. Mell refused to give up his watch and informed the soldier that the war was ended and he would not submit to be taken prisoner. Whereupon the man began cursing him and told him if he did not give up the watch at once he would blow out his brains. Dr. Mell looked the fellow straight in the eye and said in a quiet voice: "You may shoot me, sir, but you shall never have any of my property if I can help it. I am defenseless so far as weapons are concerned, but I will not yield one inch to you, even

though you murder me." And there the brave man stood, bareheaded, looking the ruffian in the face without the tremor of a muscle, expecting to be shot immediately, for the soldier had cocked his carbine and was aiming at the defenseless breast as though about to fire. He suddenly changed his mind, however, and lowering his gun he leaned forward, seized the Doctor's watch-guard, jerked out his watch, wheeled around and rode triumphantly away, cursing violently the outraged man who stood silently watching the thief ride off with his property.

While this was transpiring, a wounded Confederate soldier witnessed it with indignation from the window of one of the college buildings that had been in use for some time as a hospital. He determined to help the Doctor regain his property. He went, therefore, to the officer commanding the Federal forces and entered complaint. This General ordered a search to be made throughout the camp and the watch, together with many others that were stolen from the citizens of Athens, was recovered after much difficulty. This was the timepiece given Professor Mell by the citizens of Penfield in 1855, already referred to in this biography.

Dr. Mell, like nearly every one else throughout the South, was penniless when the war ended, and, having a large dependent family, the question, where to get bread to feed them

became a grave one. Providence, however, presided over his destiny and, even during the darkest hours, he never lost faith but kept his trust firm and steadfast in the saving power of God. It was during these desperate times that the warm and generous devotion of his friends manifested itself. It would be impossible to enumerate all those who came to his assistance while he was absent in the war and just after the close of the war, but the writer feels obliged to mention one. Mr. Mordecai Edwards, a deacon in his church at Antioch and a lifelong friend, made it his business to see that all the wants of the family were supplied while the father was in the army. If it had not been for his great kindness the wife and children would have suffered for the necessities of life. Dr. Mell frequently spoke of this and kept in his heart the deepest feelings of gratitude and affection for his friend. The churches at Antioch and Bairdstown did not forget their pastor during these dark days, but frequently in the family's need, these kind and loving friends sent boxes and some times wagon loads of provisions for "Brother Mell," and there would be rejoicing in the household at Athens. The love and admiration the members of these two churches had for him, their pastor, and the great influence for good he exerted throughout the surrounding

country made them call that section "Mell's Kingdom."

On January 1st, 1866, the exercises of the University of Georgia were resumed and the Professors were able to draw their salaries again, and the impending starvation disappeared from their homes.

In 1868, Professor Mell was asked by members of the Board of Trustees of the University of Alabama to permit his name to go before that body for the position of President, assuring him that his election would be certain. He declined, however, because he was unwilling to leave his native State where almost all of his life had been spent. The Trustees of Howard College, Alabama, conferred upon him the degree of LL.D., July 2nd, 1869.

CHAPTER XII.

ABILITIES AS A PRESIDING OFFICER.

As a parliamentarian Dr. Mell held an enviable position among his brethren in the South. There were few presiding officers his equal. His logical mind, cool self-control, clear conception of questions of order and impartial rulings, placed him in the front rank among occupants of chairs over deliberative bodies. This remarkable power of controlling men enabled him to rapidly rise to the highest position in the gift of the Baptists of the South.

He considered the knowledge of parliamentary law so important that he urged the introduction of the subject in the curriculum of every college in the country. He thought that every young man should have, at least, a general knowledge of the science in order to enable him to successfully fill positions of public trust. Following out this idea he organized in the University of Georgia a course in parliamentary law that was greatly prized by the students; and many of the distinguished graduates of this Institution, who now occupy prominent positions in Georgia and other States, were pupils under him in this im-

portant branch of learning. The course of lectures began in the University in 1870 and continued up to the time of his death in 1888.

In 1841, Dr. Mell attended the Georgia Baptist Association for the first time. He was then twenty-seven years old. Within a short time he occupied a front position among the intellects of that time-honored body, and soon became its leading spirit.

For many years he was re-elected Moderator over this Association and also presided over the deliberations of the Georgia and Southern Baptist Conventions for a great many sessions. These positions he held up to the time of his death because of his remarkable knowledge of parliamentary law and his great influence over men.

The following table gives his record as clerk and presiding officer of these great Missionary Bodies. It will be noted that he held the position of clerk of the Georgia Association for six years, and in the Georgia Convention for ten years. For thirty years he was Moderator of the first body and President of the Georgia Convention for twenty-six years, and for seventeen years he was President of the Southern Baptist Convention.

TABLE OF RECORD.

YEARS.	GA. ASSOCIATION.	GA. BAPTIST CON.	SOU. BAPTIST CON.
1845-46.	Clerk.....	Clerk.....	Dr. Mell was one of the original delegates present at Augusta when the Southern Baptist Convention was first organized. (1845.)
1847....	Clerk.....	Clerk.....	
1848....	Clerk.....	Clerk.....	
1849....	Clerk.....	Clerk.....	
1850....	Clerk.....	Clerk.....	
1851....	Clerk.....	Clerk.....	
1852....		Clerk.....	
1853....		Clerk.....	
1854....		Clerk.....	
1855....	Moderator.....	Clerk.....	
1856....	Moderator.....		President. No Convention. No Convention. President. President. President. President. President. President. President. President. President. President. President. President. President. President. President. President. President. President.
1857....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1858....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1859....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1860....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1861....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1862....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1863....	In the army.....	President.....	
1864....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1865....	Moderator.....	No Convention....	
1866....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1867....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1868....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1869....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1870....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1871....	Absent by sickness	President.....	
1872....	Absent by sickness	Absent by sickness	
1873....	Absent by sickness	Absent by sickness	
1874....	Moderator.....	Absent by sickness	
1875....	Moderator.....	Absent by sickness	
1876....	Moderator.....	Absent by sickness	
1877....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1878....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1879....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1880....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1881....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1882....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1883....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1884....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1885....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1886....	Moderator.....	President.....	
1887....	Moderator.....	President.....	

At the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention at Memphis, Tennessee, in 1867, Dr. J. P. Boyce submitted the following, which was adopted:

"Resolved, That the President (P. H. Mell) of this Convention be requested to prepare a Manual of Parliamentary Law and Usage adapted to the necessities of this Body."

Previous to this, the only parliamentary guide the Convention seemed to have was "six rules of order," printed in the minutes each year, after the Preamble and Constitution. As a result of this request "A Manual of Parliamentary Practice" was issued from the press, and on the 7th of May, 1868, was adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention. It has passed through several editions and has been revised and enlarged so as to adapt it to general and universal use. This book has also been adopted by several State Baptist Conventions, and also by the Georgia Legislature.

The thorough command that Dr. Mell had over questions relating to parliamentary law and order, and the remarkable coolness, kindness, impartiality and quickness with which he decided all questions submitted to him, rendered his position as presiding officer over the Conventions almost impregnable. His brethren were almost a unit in declaring him the most suitable man in the denomination for the Presidency. He held the chair longer than any of his predecessors, and his keen powers of discrimination and decision remained bright and undiminished to the last. Efforts were made several times, by friends of other candidates, to capture the chair, but always resulted in defeat.

The following incident is given as an interesting illustration of this fact, Dr. Mell in the chair:

"After the enrollment of delegates at a session of the Southern Baptist Convention, the chair announced that the election of officers was in order. A member moved that Dr. Mell be elected by acclamation. The chair ruled that it required unanimous consent. There was objection raised to the motion on the ground that while all were unanimous then it might not be so in the future, and it was not wise to establish a precedent that might hereafter give trouble. The chair ruled that the point was well taken. An appeal was made from the decision of the chair on the ground that the decision had been already established in the action of the Convention in 1869, in electing Dr. Mell by acclamation. The Convention sustained the appeal, and the member renewed his motion to elect by acclamation. It was moved as a substitute that the Convention proceed to elect by ballot, and the mover was beginning to sustain his view of the importance of adhering to this at a time when all were agreed as to who should be President, when, at the earnest request of Dr. Mell, the motion to elect by acclamation was withdrawn, and the ballot for President was proceeded with—there being no nominations—and the result was that of 232 votes cast, Dr. Mell received 230."

A visitor at the meetings of the Southern Baptist Convention at Russellville, Ky., in 1866, said:

"We think Dr. Mell the best presiding officer we have ever seen; and we heard many present at the Convention express the same opinion. He understands perfectly the duties of the position, and acts with that deliberation, promptness and firmness so necessary to give order and dispatch to the business of a deliberative body. With dignity and firmness, yet with kindness, he held in check any who might be unruly, and enabled the humblest and most modest member of the Convention to gain the ear of the body. No press of business, or excitement incident to such meetings, when unexpected questions were sprung,

could for a moment disconcert him. He impressed all with his peculiar fitness for the position which he so gracefully filled."

National Baptist, in 1868.

"Dr. Mell has the reputation of being one of the best presiding officers of the United States. An examination of his "Manual" proves that his superiority in this respect comes from a very full comprehension of parliamentary science. He has not simply studied rules, but understood principles, and learned to apply them.

* * * * We advise every man who aspires to office, to prepare himself for it by a perfect mastery of the principles set forth in this book; and we wish it could be made an invariable law that no man shall attempt to preside who is not prepared by an acquaintance with parliamentary science. We give the preference to this book over any other we have seen."

The strict construction of the duties of the President of the Southern Convention, and the limit of power assigned him by the Constitution were well understood and carefully guarded by Dr. Mell during the many years he occupied the Chair. The following letter written by him in 1868, and published in the Baptist papers of the South, well illustrate this care and consideration:

THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION.

"Providence permitting, the Southern Baptist Convention will meet, according to its own appointment, at Baltimore, on Thursday before the Second Lord's day in May next. (1868.)

"Respectful attention has been given to the request of valued brethren that the meeting should be postponed

for a year; but no action has been taken in the premises, first, because two of the Boards have not united in the request as prescribed by the Constitution; and, second, because even with such concurrence, I have no right to act in the existing state of things, and for the reason given. With the Constitution printed as it ought to be, the President has no right to make the proposed change for any reason short of famine, pestilence or war; with the Constitution printed as it is, he has no authority in the premises at all.

"At the meeting in Savannah, in 1861, the Constitution was so amended as to make its Article XII. read as follows:

"'The Convention shall hold its meetings biennially, but extra meetings may be called by the President, with the approbation of any one of its Board of Managers. A majority of the attending delegates shall form a quorum for the transaction of business. The President, or in the event of his death, either of the Vice-Presidents of the Convention may, at the request of two of the Boards, postpone or alter the place of the meeting of the Convention, when it may be deemed by him inexpedient to convene at time or place appointed.'—[See minutes of 1863.]

"The Constitution was again amended at Russellville; and, while there is no evidence in the minutes of the proceedings that this article was changed at all, by clerical mistake, I suppose, it was so printed as to appear that it had been amended by striking out the last sentence commencing with, 'The President, and in the event of his death,' etc. This, if an error, has remained unchallenged to the present time, even though this ARTICLE was submitted to revision and amendment by the Convention at Memphis.

"I trust that all will see, from this showing, that the Boards and President have no constitutional right to act at all in the premises.

"P. H. MELL,
"President Southern Baptist Convention."

Sometimes his responses to questions and motions carried with them much humor and keen wit.

At the Session of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1887 a member was arguing some mooted point on mission methods, and he turned to the President with the question: "Am I not right, sir?" With the utmost precision the reply came: "The chair answers questions only on points of order."

Another instance of this tendency to humor in the ruling of the chair at times, and also a fine illustration of kind rebuke is well brought out in the following article that appeared in the *Louisville Courier-Journal* some time in 1870:

"No visitor to the Convention can fail to be struck with the dignified, prompt but courteous officer who presides over its deliberations. And if there are points raised which require perfect knowledge of parliamentary law, tact, firmness, one sees at once that the hand of a master has the helm, and that from his decision there is rarely, if ever, a successful appeal to the house. All seem to be thoroughly impressed with the ability, courtesy, perfect fairness and firmness with which President Mell conducts the proceedings of the Body. Indeed we have never seen his equal as a presiding officer. His book—"Mell's Parliamentary Practice"—has received the highest encomiums of the press, and is coming into general use. * *

"He espoused the cause of the South during the war with all the ardor of his nature, and was for a time the gallant and efficient Colonel of a Georgia regiment.

"He has honestly 'accepted the situation' since the war, but we presume that some of his brethren across the

border would pronounce him (because of his candor) to be still 'unreconstructed *e. g.*, when in Baltimore, in 1868, the response of the Southern Baptist Convention to the fraternal message of the Northern Baptist Convention was being discussed, the venerable Dr. Welch, of New York, had the floor, and was making a very loving speech. To show that he did not censure harshly his Southern brethren, he said: 'Why, Brother President, if I had been in the South, such are the impulses of my heart that I should no doubt have been one of the leaders of the rebellion.' At the utterance of the last word the gavel came down sharply, and Dr. Mell said in his firmest but most courteous tones: 'The chair rules that word out of order, on this floor.' 'Why, Brother President, what shall I call it sir?' meekly asked Dr. Welch. 'The chair will not presume to dictate, sir, but he insists upon his ruling that the word 'rebellion' in that connection is out of order. He shall so hold, unless you appeal from the decision of the chair. Do you appeal, sir?' 'No, Brother President, I do not appeal,' responded Dr. Welch; and there were not a few followers of the 'late so-called' who inwardly rejoiced that, in any respectable body, the word 'rebellion' could be ruled out of order."

During a session of the Georgia Baptist Convention a member who represented some benevolent enterprise was trying to raise money from the brethren. In the course of his remarks he was very bitter in his denunciation of ministers who wasted their money in the gratification of "sinful appetites," particularly in the matter of using tobacco. His speech was having the opposite effect from that desired by the speaker. Dr. Mell, anxious to aid the cause under consideration, watched for an opportunity to put the

Convention in a good humor again. The speaker continued in an injured tone to add up the amounts spent by preachers in these "sinfully wasting habits," and turning to the President he said: "A pipe full of vile tobacco costs five cents, doesn't it, Brother Moderator?" "Yes, sir," promptly responded the President, "and it is worth it, too." The Convention was uproarious for a while, resulting in the restoration of good feeling and in stopping the speaker in his offensive line of remarks. It was really of great service to him, however, because the body subscribed liberally to the cause he was advocating. The presiding officer said afterwards, in relating this incident, that he would have given more than the tobacco was worth if he could have indulged in a smoke at the time the member was speaking.

At a session of the Southern Baptist Convention a gentleman was addressing the body in such low tones that the ladies present, who were seated in the gallery and back part of the house, could not hear what was said. A member who was seated among the ladies rose impatiently to a point of order, and said: "Brother President, I rise to a point of order; we cannot hear the speaker, the ladies are losing his address." "The point is well taken," replied the chair promptly, "It is always in order to address the ladies in this Convention."

A newspaper account of the Southern Baptist Convention, has the following clause:

"It is amusing to hear the varied questions asked of the presiding officer of so large a body as our Convention. The Doctor brought down the house when, in answer to a question from a brother he instantly replied: 'The Lord only knows.' Dr. Mell is never at a loss, never hesitates, nor will he give any decision on a question not within proper limits of his prerogative.

At a certain meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention Dr. Mell called a brother to preside over the body during his temporary absence. Business moved along all right until some one made a motion that called many to their feet, all clamoring for recognition from the chair. The President hopelessly pounded on the desk for order, order, but there was no order. Dr. Mell was sent for by some one who recognized the importance of a cool headed man in the chair. He came back and quietly assumed charge of the chair. The gavel tapped lightly on the table, and instantly, as if by magic, disorder ceased, groups of members that had formed all over the house and were talking excitedly and loudly, dispersed and sat down, and the great body moved smoothly and orderly on with its business as if it had been some vast piece of machinery under the control of its master.

Dr. Mell's decision was seldom appealed from, and was reversed but once or twice during the

whole time he presided over the Georgia and Southern Conventions. A combination was formed once to confuse and overthrow him. But he was calm and cool during the heat of the debate, never losing his head for a single instant, while his opponents on the floor were excited and visibly anxious to gain every point of advantage. The President was fully aware of the object in view, and his mastery of parliamentary law enabled him to hold them in check, while, at the same time, he was ruling in every point with justice and firmness. He managed in such a way, during the heat of the battle, as to induce his antagonists to appeal from a decision he had just made in their favor, and the appeal was sustained. As soon as they realized what had been done, they were thrown in the utmost confusion, and were compelled to move a reconsideration, and then the decision was unanimously sustained. This victory was related to the writer by Dr. Mell as an illustration of the great power, a knowledge of parliamentary science gave to one over an antagonist in a deliberative body.

The respect and esteem with which he was regarded by his brethren all over the South made them rely on his decisions, not only as a presiding officer but as an arbitrator and judge. There are two noted instances of this fact that came under the personal notice of the writer. One of these is related to illustrate the statement made.

Two churches in an Association in Georgia became estranged because one of them received in full fellowship the excluded member of the other without the latter's knowledge. Each church had its friends and followers among the other churches of the Association, and the breach thus caused in the body was very grave and threatened its existence. The matter had been appealed to the Association and feeling ran high. It was conceded that if it came to an open discussion in the body the organization was doomed. Dr. Mell, on being informed of the difficulty, was urged by the cool headed members of the two churches to attend the Association and assist them to stem the tide and allay the trouble. He consented to do so, and did meet with the Association. When the subject came up some one moved that the whole matter be referred to Dr. Mell and that his decision be final. This motion was objected to on the part of two or three members, but when it was put to the house it was almost unanimously carried. Both of the churches, in which the trouble originated, agreed to abide by his decision. He attended a meeting at each church, listened to the evidence and then submitted his advice. The brethren accepted it at once, the whole matter was thoroughly and amicably settled, and those two churches are now on the most affectionate terms.

At the opening of the Southern Baptist Con-

vention in Baltimore, at the Seventh Baptist Church, in 1884, when it was announced that Dr. Mell was re-elected President, he thanked the members for another fresh expression of their confidence. He said: "Presiding over a great body like this was not without its embarrassments. A desire to deal impartially often made a presiding officer appear stern. But I cannot serve you as your President without following the technicalities of parliamentary law. I am the servant of the Convention, not the master, and it is my desire to aid the body to carry through successfully all the business relating to the great issues that will be considered by this Convention. The brethren have elected me for a purpose, and that was to give direction to the proceedings in so far as that can be done by a presiding officer. Brethren must, therefore, understand that I do not intend to be arbitrary, but to obey strict deliberative usages in all decisions. Unless I do this there would be 'confusion worse confounded.'"

Just after the meeting of the Georgia Baptist Association, in 1885, P. H. Mell, in writing to his son, made the following statement concerning this body. He was an exceedingly modest man, and was not accustomed to refer to things that were complimentary to himself, but this action on the part of the Georgia Association touched him deeply, and he gave utterance to his feelings in the letter mentioned:

"That body did to me a very great act of kindness. For nearly, if not quite, one hundred years it has met the week previous to the second Lord's day in October. I came very near failing to attend this year on account of a conflict between that body and the University—indeed, I had announced in a way to give it general circulation that I could not attend this year. When the time approached, however, I was able to so adjust the affairs of the University as to permit me to be present at the opening of the Association. I was unanimously re-elected to the chair. It became generally understood that my duties at the University conflicted each year with the meetings of the Association, and they *unanimously* voted to change their time of meeting so as to suit me, and this, too, in spite of my earnest request that they should not make the change unless they for other reasons preferred to do so. It profoundly affected me."

The following extracts from newspapers are given to indicate the universal esteem and admiration many seemed to have for Dr. Mell as a presiding officer:

Christian Herald, of Alabama, 1870.

"THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONVENTION."

"We believe that it is an acknowledged fact, that as a presiding officer, Dr. P. H. Mell, the President of the Convention, has no equal. He is, by far, the best parliamentarian we ever saw. The Baptists of the South ought to be thankful that they have a man so eminently fitted for the position he occupies. We are confident that the Convention owes much to Dr. Mell for the good order which prevails during its session. If it were not for the promptness and accuracy with which he decides questions of order, we fear that our Convention would oftentimes

find itself in a very embarrassing situation, but thanks to President Mell, his head is always clear when confusion reigns around him."

Dr. J. L. M. Currey, in *Selma Messenger*:

"Dr. Mell's Parliamentary Practice is the result of a request made by the Southern Baptist Convention. Having examined it with some care, we unhesitatingly pronounce it the best hand-book of Parliamentary law with which we are acquainted. Stripped of confusing detail—written in a clear, judicial style, without a superfluous word—it eliminates the principles of the science, and develops so clearly and systematically the rules for the government of deliberative bodies, that hereafter there can be no excuse for ignorance. . . .

"It may not be known that there are three codes, the British, the American, and that which obtains in the House of Representatives at Washington. In the last, the rules are subordinated to purposes of party tyranny, and the suppression of legitimate debate. Dr. Mell conforms to the American Code, stating clearly and concisely wherein it differs from the others.

"Dr. Mell is one of the best presiding officers in America, has an analytical and discriminating mind like Mr. Calhoun's, has studied the subject thoroughly and philosophically, and in this compact work, has satisfactorily supplied a felt want."

Texas paper on the Session at Waco, in 1883:

"The effect of the vast crowd on the meetings of the Convention was, in some respects, bad. It was a matter of impossibility to have that good order and decorum in the transaction of business which have so long characterized the meetings of the Southern Baptist Convention, and it was even a little amusing to hear our 'prince of parliamentarians' (Dr. Mell), declare on the last day of the session: 'I feel like the figure-head of a magnificent

ship that is darting and pitching in the sea. I never knew a more good humored crowd, but it is beyond my capacity to control.' But really he had the ship, crew and passengers entirely under his control, and made the Convention present as dignified an appearance as the United States Senate, at the time referred to by Baldwin, when he said that 'Webster held the helm while Clay blew the gale.'

Another Texas paper, commenting on the Convention that convened at Waco, said:

"In the chair sat the venerable Dr. Mell, whose piercing eye, gray hair, tall, straight person, indicated penetration, thought and firmness. The prince of parliamentarians, he rules the body with measured ease. 'I appeal from the decision of the chair,' is becoming beautifully less, and Dr. Mell, in the Southern Baptist Convention, is almost instinctively recognized as President without the vote of acclamation. Upon motion of Rev. G. A. Nunnally, of Georgia, Dr. P. H. Mell was elected President by acclamation. The result was heard with applause, whereupon the President suggested that nothing is more disorderly than applause in a religious assembly.

"The reign of courtesy in the Convention was almost supreme. Of course, the Southern Baptists can never cease to admire the genius of Dr. Mell as a presiding officer. He rules with the inflexible rigor of a tyrant, and yet with a spirit so genial and sympathetic that no reasonable man can ever be embarrassed by his presence. But, apart from him, the Convention was knit together by the sweet ties of unity and concord. The fact is, it is not common, not respectable, not decent, not even bearable, for a brother to violate in the Southern Baptist Convention the most refined principle of courtesy."

Dr. Bright, of New York, said at the meeting

of the Southern Baptist Convention, at Baltimore, in 1884:

"I am glad to be here. I am glad to see you, sir (President Mell), who have written the best work on parliamentary practice I have ever seen. I am glad to see a man put his own principles into practice."

1884. *Biblical Recorder*:

"Dr. Mell presided over the Convention with even more than former success. He seems to grow brighter and quicker with age, and to increase in power and efficiency as a presiding officer."

The *Augusta Chronicle*, speaking of the session of the Southern Baptist Convention that met in Augusta, Georgia, says:

"Among all the men who are prominent on the floor, and eminent in the officers' chairs, the *Chronicle* must be pardoned for noting the inspiring and directing presence of Patrick Hues Mell. He has been President of the body for twelve years, and was yesterday returned with overwhelming accord to his high station. He presides with great strength and dignity. His voice is strong and sympathetic; his manner is firm and courteous; his decisions are prompt and clear cut, and his rulings are as sound and unimpeachable as organic principles. Dr. Mell is not only authority upon laws and precedents for deliberative bodies, but is himself a trained and distinguished practical parliamentarian."

Dr. J. J. D. Renfroe, in a letter to a religious paper, concerning the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Montgomery, Alabama, makes the following comment concerning the Address of Dr. Mell on Parliamentary Law:

"That was a grand Convention; as a deliberative body we have never had anything superior to it. And by the way, I never before so well understood the character of the Southern Baptist Convention as a deliberative body in distinction from so many mere mass meetings which are called Conventions. Dr. Mell's exposition of that feature of our Convention was lucid. In 1864 I said in a newspaper article that it was worth the expense of a trip to the Convention to witness his manner of presiding. That was just after the Memphis Convention, where points of order were frequently raised. I feel the same about it yet. Young ministers ought to study his book on Parliamentary Practice, and while he lives they ought to watch his administration of it."

The *Texas Herald* said:

"Dr. Mell is the presiding genius and central figure of the Southern Baptist Convention. He must be a dull student of parliamentary practice who does not learn something new and valuable every year he attends.

"When the Convention was ready to elect officers some one rose and said: 'I move that the Secretary be requested to cast the ballot of the Convention for Dr. P. H. Mell as President of the Convention.' The response from the chair came quick: 'No such motion is known in parliamentary law.' Another asked: 'What would be the proper motion to elect by acclamation.' The chair replied: 'That would be the proper motion itself.' Then the member said: 'I move that Dr. Mell be elected President of this Convention by acclamation.' A voice from the Assembly said: 'I object; it is not Baptistic.' The chair ruled: 'One is a majority in such a case. Proceed to prepare your ballots.' "

Another paper, commenting on this Session, said:

"After religious exercises (in the afternoon of the first day) it was moved that Dr. Mell be re-elected President

by acclamation; but it was decided to be more Baptistice to waste half an hour in taking a ballot, which resulted in an unanimous vote for Dr. Mell."

It was also stated by some that he should be supplanted as President of the Georgia Baptist Convention because of his connection with the State University. That the influence he exerted as President of the Convention attracted attention to the State University, and thus withdrew pupils from the halls of Mercer University. But this objection, if such it could be called, seemed to have no weight with the large number of delegates that comprised the Convention each year, because Dr. Mell was never opposed by a vote large enough to be considered of any special moment, but his elections were next to unanimous:

Chicago Standard, in 1887:

"The Convention proceedings are always suggestive to a Northern man. The dignified and kindly presence of the occupant of the chair—Chancellor Mell, of the Georgia State University—is well nigh the most marked feature of each session. Again and again, during many years, he has been called to this office. Perfect as a parliamentarian, no less so as a Christian gentleman, he holds the great audience in his hand. As Dr. Strong noted in his speech, responsive to the call made upon him, the business of the Convention is characterized by a spontaneity much lacking with us. But the admirable guidance of the chair, and the parliamentary instinct characteristic of Southerners, prevents freedom from degenerating into license, and the business is done with

order and dispatch. Applause is forbidden, but what can Chancellor Mell do when Henson, or Hawthorne, or Lorimer, or Dixon or Greene has the floor?"

Another paper extract says:

"There are few men who have been pressed into service so often as presiding officer as Doctor P. H. Mell. Tall, erect, dignified, affable, clearly understanding his duties, and discharging them impartially; comprehending without hesitation the most intricate questions of parliamentary law, and deciding promptly their bearing upon the most involved and prolonged and vexed propositions, we pronounce him the Prince of Moderators. He is Chancellor of the University of Georgia, Moderator of his District Association, President of the Georgia Baptist Convention, his laurels are crowned by the unanimity with which for the eleventh session he has been chosen to preside over the Southern Baptist Convention. Withal, Dr. Mell is one of the most scholarly, logical men in the South. Listened to with profound interest as a preacher, he is none the less influential in private life, because of his Christian simplicity and uniform piety. Although advanced in years, his eye is yet undimmed, and his strength unabated, and we trust many years of increasing usefulness are before him."

CHAPTER XIII

REMOVAL OF MERCER UNIVERSITY.

At the first meeting of the Georgia Baptist Convention after the war, the Board of Trustees of Mercer University urged, in their report, that the college be removed from Penfield to some other town or city that would offer the best inducements. It was argued by them that the patronage of the Institution had fallen off so much because of its inaccessibility that it must be moved in order to save it. Dr. Mell, and a number of other brethren in the State, were opposed to the change for several reasons:

1st. The fathers of the denomination had placed the college at Penfield, and it had flourished there for many years. 2nd. Penfield was a quiet village, where the boys had the fewest temptations possible. 3rd. That it was not inaccessible. 4th. That the best influences existed in Penfield for the welfare of the college, because the people were almost entirely Baptists. 5th. The removal of a long established Institution would be almost fatal to its interests. The effects of the war had not entirely disappeared and in a few years the University would recover its old-time prosperity. They thought the Baptists of the State would rally

to the support of the college at Penfield as well as they would if it was located in any other portion of Georgia. The old Georgia Association, that gave the college its birth, was almost unanimously opposed to its removal.

This question came up in the Convention every year, and the motion to remove was defeated each time until the session at Newnan, in 1870, when it was carried by a large majority of the delegates present. A committee, consisting of one member from each Association, was appointed to examine places bidding for the college and consider all questions relating to the removal. Dr. Mell was President of the Convention during these years, and therefore took no part in the discussions on the subject, though he did not conceal the fact, in conversation with leading Baptists, that he was opposed to the removal of the Institution.

Rev. D. E. Butler, President of the Board of Trustees of Mercer University, and also chairman of the committee that had in charge the removal of the college, wrote to Dr. Mell the following letter, and received from him a characteristic reply:

“MADISON, GA., July 4th, 1870.

DEAR BROTHER MELL:

When returning from the Convention, you said to me, if my memory is right, that you would co-operate with us in the removal of Mercer University. With that declaration in mind, and believing that all the brethren

will gladly accept your influence in this behalf and having consulted with some of them upon the subject, and they agreeing with me—I cordially invite you to Penfield next week, say Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday, or all three days.

The brethren will receive you kindly and by free, frank interchange of views endeavor to establish that cordiality, harmony and confidence, which for some years seem to have been wanting in their and your intercourse.

Removing Mercer University is a great work—the success of it requires all the influence of all the Baptists in the State. And with harmony and union in the present condition of the subject, between those in favor and those against removal, half of the work is done and an united front prepared for all future questions and difficulties. Believing that you will receive this in the Christian spirit by which it is prompted, I am, Dear Brother,

Yours in Christian bonds,

D. E. BUTLER."

To this letter Dr. Mell replied as follows:

"ATHENS, GA., July 5th, 1870.

DEAR BROTHER BUTLER:

Your kind letter of yesterday has just been received. I reply to it immediately. You are laboring under a mistake in regard to a remark you think I made on the cars in reference to co-operation in the removal of Mercer University. I do not remember saying anything to you on the subject except some jocose remarks about the house on wheels, and the necessity for you gentlemen to go to Penfield with your tents. It was in my heart, and I said to Dr. Tucker, which you may have overheard, that, *when the college is removed, I will use all the influence I have to induce the Baptists to rally around it.* But it is not removed yet; and in my opinion it ought not to be. I sincerely think it to be wrong in principle and suicidal in policy to take it away from Penfield with such connections. I could not co-operate to secure or facilitate re-

removal. On the contrary I candidly confess that I am prepared to rejoice should you yet be legitimately defeated--especially if all the advocates of removal should waive all factious opposition and rally around the University where it is. I deem it proper to continue though the line of policy I have marked out for myself, i. e., to take no active part, pro or con. on the question of removal. When the result is arrived at, whatever it may be, I shall actively use all the influence I have to induce the Baptists to abide by it, to acquiesce in it, and to sustain Mercer University.

I thank you for your polite and fraternal invitation to attend Commencement. It would give me great pleasure to do so, but my college duties will prevent. Besides our Chancellor is absent and his duties and responsibilities devolve on me.

With much respect

Yours fraternally,

P. H. MELL.

He kept the promise given in this letter and used all the influence he had to induce the Baptists to rally around Mercer University after it was removed to Macon. He bowed to the decision made by the majority of his brethren.

After the Convention in 1871, when it was definitely settled to remove the University to Macon, he wrote the following letter. This shows clearly his loyalty to the interests of the denomination:

"A noticeable feature of the Convention just adjourned was the magnanimous, forbearing and fraternal spirit that generally prevailed. A question of threatening character, relating to the educational interests of the denomination—one involving division of sentiment, deep

feeling, and personal interest, was settled to the mutual satisfaction of those directly at issue.

Two Conventions in succession have unmistakably decided in favor of removal; and we, therefore, suppose that the majority of our people, who care anything about the subject, are of the same opinion. The question, then, of the removal of the University from Penfield, seems to be definitely and finally settled. If this be so, should not those of us in the minority imitate the magnanimity of the people at Penfield, and submit and acquiesce?

True, there are some important and delicate questions connected with the location of the University yet to be passed upon by the Board of Trustees; but may we not hope that the wisdom and piety of these brethren will be adequate to the occasion?

The sacrifices I recommend to others—and *more*—I am willing to submit to myself. Some, I am informed, think the position I occupy in the denomination in the State is a hindrance to harmony and union among our people. Very well; I am prepared to abandon it, however much I prize it. Whatever power I have had as President of the State Convention, I have endeavored to wield for harmony and union. I now give notice that I lay it down for the accomplishment of the same ends.

P. H. MELL."

The paper that published this communication made the following comments on the subject matter:

"The spirit of the letter from President Mell is worthy of all commendation. It is a fresh proof that he knows how to speak to the *heart* of his brethren. Even his eminent qualifications for the position which he has adorned through a series of years, scarcely become him so well as the willingness to retire from it in the interests of harmony and union."

Another paper, also speaking of this letter, at the time said:

“The letter of Dr. Mell breathes a magnanimous Christian spirit. Georgia Baptists would not have him retire from the position he has so long adorned—they only desire the aid of his comprehensive intellect, and the influence of his high character in shaping the future of their great denominational enterprises. He has touched a chord in the hearts of his brethren that will give forth no uncertain sound

S. P. C.

WEST POINT, GA., May 5th, 1871.”

The Baptists decided in 1882 to try and raise an endowment fund of \$100,000 for the Institution, and representatives were sent to all the Associations to lay the question before the brethren and thus create an interest in the work. At the meeting of the Georgia Association, at Antioch, Oglethorpe county, in 1883, a motion was made to assume for the Association \$5,000 of the \$100,000. Before it could be seconded, Dr. Mell spoke from the Moderator's chair and asked that it be made \$10,000. This motion was unanimously adopted. A committee was appointed, consisting of eleven members, to take such steps as might be deemed advisable for raising said sum during the following year, or as soon thereafter as practicable.

When Dr. Mell reported the action of the Association to his churches at Antioch and

Bairdstown, there was the strongest opposition manifested because the people objected to having the college moved from Penfield, and did not propose to extend a helping hand for the accomplishment of this purpose. But Dr. Mell not only persuaded them to withdraw their objections for the good of the denomination, but contributed a large portion of the assessment out of his own pocket. The amounts allotted to his churches were not only raised, but the entire \$10,000 assumed by the Association was paid into the Treasury of the college. It is a matter of interest to note that the money raised by the Georgia Association was more than half the total amount contributed by all the other Associations in the State, and yet this Association stood alone in its opposition to the removal of the college from Penfield.

Another instance of the fulfilment of his promise made to Mr. Butler was the liberal annual contribution he made to the support of the Theological Chair in the Institution, and besides the help he extended a number of young men in the college who were studying for the ministry.

In 1870 Dr. Mell was elected President of Georgetown College, Kentucky, but he declined the honor. About this time, also, some of the most influential Baptists in Georgia began to agitate the question of electing him President of Mercer University. Before this movement took

decided shape, however, several of his intimate friends approached him to find out what his decision would be if the position was tendered him. He refused to permit his name to go before the Board, and the matter was dropped.

CHAPTER XIV.

ILLNESS.

The duties of the University, the care of his churches, the calls made upon him by the denomination, his literary work, and an enormous correspondence, proved too great a strain upon his nervous system. Domestic afflictions also came with crushing force upon him. Three noble, promising, brilliant sons, one after the other, were taken from him by death in early manhood. His relations to his family were peculiarly beautiful and tender, and his grief for the loss of his children was intense.

These labors and trials were too much for his overtaxed system, and in August, 1871, while filling his pulpit at Bairdstown, he was prostrated by a nervous attack which came near terminating his life. He was unable to reach his home for several weeks and his friends all over the State despaired of his life. But it pleased God, in His kind Providence, to spare him for still greater usefulness. For an entire year or more he was unable to attend to the duties of his chair in the University of Georgia, and was forced to give up all preaching and all other active work. The Board of Trustees of the Uni-

versity of Georgia were exceedingly kind to him during his illness, and gave him a vacation of one year, continuing his salary

We are indebted to the same kind friend previously quoted, Mrs. D. B. Fitzgerald, for the following beautiful and feeling description of the scenes preceding his illness, and the wonderful patience and courage he exhibited during its course:

In 1871, when already overtaxed, he conducted meetings at Antioch and Baird's, feeling within himself that he was giving way beneath his burdens, and impressed with the thought that the hour of his departure was near at hand. With an earnestness so deep that it seemed like prophecy, with an impassioned pathos he told them at Antioch that his work was ended. And as he looked over the congregation he saw some who had been sitting under his ministry from youth, until their heads were whitening with approaching age, and yet he had never been able to touch their hearts.

"Must I," he asked, "leave you, as I found you, out of Christ? Must all my arguments, my entreaties, my prayers, be only so many millstones hanged about your necks to drag you down into perdition? My skirts are clear. I have warned you of God's righteous indignation. I have wooed you by all the sweetness of Christ's love." Lifting his eyes, he said solemnly, "God is my witness, I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God, *but O how can I leave you.* For many of you, I feel it will be only a little while till we shall hold sweet converse in a better world, but for you who have resisted the power of the Gospel so long, must I stand in judgment against *you?*"

He talked as Aaron might have plead with Israel before he ascended Mount Hor, from which he was never more

to return. And God gave him the desire of his heart in great measure, for men who had never been melted before came forward in the congregation, and with tears, asked the prayers of God's people, and were afterwards united to the church, together with many others during the never-to-be-forgotten revival that followed.

He went from Antioch to Bairdstown, and the same scenes were re-enacted, and here he fell in his pulpit during the service. Often had he been heard to say, "Let me wear out, not rust out. Let me die in the harness." And it seemed then he was to have his wish. For just in proportion to the great will power put forth to resist this illness, in like ratio was the reaction, and the result was a total collapse. He went down, down so deep into the dark valley of the shadow of death till there was no hope that he would ever be given back to us in this world. But God, who had guided him along such a remarkable career, meant there should be one more crowning excellence added to the well-rounded character, one more rich fruit to the already full cluster of Christian graces. He became an object lesson of the most beautiful patience, of the most humble submission to God's will, a model for invalids. Nothing in his whole life was more wonderful, nothing more admirable, nothing that showed more fully how completely he loved and trusted God. Here was all his preaching crytallized into practice.

He had always been of slight figure, but was remarkably free from bodily ailments; his erect carriage, his alert movements, his quick, springing step showed that his physical organization was strong and enduring. He was wont to stretch out his right arm and say laughingly: "Nervous! Why I have no nerves! I am strung with tougher stuff than that. I work till I am tired, and when I lie down, I am asleep in two minutes after I get settled on my pillow."

He rejoiced in this immunity from pain, and thanked God for the health he enjoyed. But when he was struck down in his most useful career, one who has not wit-

nessed similar sufferings can form no idea of the intensity of his anguish. Only the sustaining grace of God kept him through that awful time. And yet he gave no sign of impatience, never a murmur of complaint. Domestic virtues shone pre-eminently in him. Never was a more devoted husband and father, and when this stroke fell on him it dried up every channel of joy in that household. His faithful nurses tended him with tireless vigilance and tender, enduring love. It was long before he was able to walk and as the prostrate nerves slowly regained their equilibrium, what avenues of torture they became, but never a word of repining. He gave no utterance to the despair that must have tugged at his heart many times when, after weeks of slow improvement he would relapse, and find himself again "at the bottom of the well," as he expressed it. Hoping when he could, and patiently enduring when there seemed no ground for hope, he made the most of the situation. Never forgetting that life is a breath of God, and an inestimable boon, he religiously refrained from any imprudence, or indulgence that might result in harm. While greatly desiring to depart and be with Christ, duty required that he should be careful of the body which seemed so hopelessly wrecked. He had spent his life as a student and thinker; his keen and analytical mind had delighted in hard questions, but now he dared not even try to think. The least effort at concentration of thought brought keen suffering. Stripped of his strength mentally as well as physically, he could do nothing.

How vividly the writer recalls those trying days. Whenever the sun shone he would be much out in the open air, "taking a sun-bath" he called it. He would sit on the porch for hours. Before him stood the college buildings, and the chapel bell elanged out the hours of recitation, his colleagues passed to and fro, the students swarmed over the campus, the streets were full of busy men, and the hum and noise fell on his ear as he sat in enforced idleness. Day after day he sat, not fretting, but with the gentle docility of a little child waiting for Nature's slow recuperation.

He delighted in the companionship of little children, and amused himself with their simple pleasures. With a smile, sadder than tears to those that loved him so much, he would say, "I am a child again myself. I have to be taken care of. I am powerless to help myself, but God's will be done."

As is said of Job, "In all this, he sinned not, nor charged God foolishly," for many, many months he bore this crucial test. "They also serve who stand and wait," and at no period of his eventful life did Dr. Mell preach more forcibly than during those dreary, painful days of suffering. He had taught by precept how God can satisfy the soul even in extremity of suffering, but he showed by unwavering example how fully he believed what he had preached. It seemed to his churches, left without a pastor, that God had stopped his work, his pupils mourned his absence from the class, his family were heartbroken to see how completely he had been overcome by disease, and they felt as if an irreparable loss had fallen upon them. And yet this dark back-ground throws out in bold relief a brilliant picture. The wonderful exhibition of patient submission to God, of sweet reliance on Jesus, was the crowning excellence of his fruitful life, a richer legacy for his children than any his busy hands had accumulated. And when God's glorious purpose had been served, and the faithfulness of his servant had been proven, He permitted him to be restored to health. And more than a decade of life was granted him. He preached as never before, his hearers caught a sweeter ring in his voice, his spiritual sight was clearer, his heart more mellow, and some of his sermons were matchless in their depth of tenderness and power. Like Paul, he could say, "I know in whom I have believed." "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of life."

After suffering for nearly a year his physician decided that it would be necessary to take a trip

on the ocean in order to revive his prostrated nervous system and restore him to health again. As soon as his friends in Georgia and other Southern States learned of the decision of the physician they urged Dr. Mell to take a trip to Europe and generously clinched the argument by presenting him with a check for \$1,000 to defray the expenses. This liberal proof of the great esteem and admiration in which he was held by his brethren all over the South touched him very deeply. The trip was taken, in company with his wife, and he returned sufficiently restored in health, to resume his duties at the University and as pastor of his two churches. Within a year or so after his return from abroad he fully regained his health and strength and seemed to take a stronger hold upon life than before. The Savannah church again elected him pastor in 1874, but he declined to give up his work in Athens, and with his churches at Antioch and Bairdstown.

CHAPTER XV.

PUBLICATIONS.

The subject of this biography, in addition to his other labors, was a voluminous and able writer upon educational and religious topics. His active mind was continually at work upon subjects of interest to the people, and he was a constant contributor to the various newspapers, both denominational and secular. His style was clear, logical and forcible, and his conclusions came directly home to the minds of his hearers. He was especially able in defending the doctrines of his denomination, and his writings were always highly valued and extensively circulated.

In the "History of Georgia Baptists" a writer in speaking of this feature of Dr. Mell's work, makes the following comments:

"He is the author of several able works, quite different in character. His book on 'Baptism' is small but conclusive, and covers briefly the whole subject, leaving little else to be desired, for the satisfaction of inquirers after truth. His Manuals on Corrective Church Discipline, and Parliamentary Practice, are the emanations of a mind thoroughly at home on the subjects discussed, and are exceedingly valuable; the latter has been adopted by various bodies in the United States—among others the Legislature of Georgia. He has also published small but able works on Slavery, on Predestination, on Calvinism, on

God's Providential Government, and on the Philosophy of Prayer. His last work, as yet unfinished, which, promises to be his greatest and most useful publication, and the matured fruits of lifetime thought and study, is on Church Polity, a subject of which he may be considered the master, from a scriptural standpoint."

Besides the above the following additional works are also mentioned because they discussed important questions.

"Keep the Sabbath" was written in 1862, at the request of the Georgia Baptist Convention, as a tract to be distributed among the soldiers of the Confederate army.

"The Lord's Supper." Discusses the points of agreement and disagreement between Baptists and all other important denominations.

"Coming to Christ with its methods and encouragements." Published at the request of the Alabama Baptist Convention.

"College Government—Dormitory System." Published in 1880.

"The University of Georgia"—defended against attacks.

"The University of Georgia"—Reply to the Report of the Board of Visitors in their criticisms of the Institution. 1884.

"The Fathers of our Association," (Georgia). 1885.

"Statements and discussions elicited by attacks and criticisms on the University of Georgia."

1887. This work was the last elaborate production from his pen before his death and was remarkable for its singular vigor and clearness. He devoted his entire vacation to the preparation of this work instead of taking the rest he so much needed, and many thought the overwork was the cause of his last illness.

CHAPTER XVI.

ELECTION AS CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF GEORGIA.

At the Commencement exercises of the University of Georgia, in 1878, without his solicitation or knowledge, Dr. Mell was elected Chancellor. At first he declined the position because the responsibilities were so great and the work was so hard he feared his strength was not equal to the task. Besides this the University at that time was not in a flourishing condition, and in order to bring it up to a high standard and revive the interest sustained in it a few years before, the Chancellor would be compelled to exhibit marked skill in planning and in marshaling his forces. Moreover he would be subjected to harsh criticism for the condition of the University at that time, for which he was in no manner responsible. A committee from the Board waited on him, however, and urged him to reconsider his declination because his election was unanimous and the University needed his wise direction. This action of the Board was strongly supported by the unanimous request of the Faculty that he accept the position; the Alumni Society passed resolutions and waited upon him by committee

with the same urgent request; and appeals came from citizens of Athens, that he accede to the wishes of the Board of Trustees. He was unable to resist this pressure and withdrew his objections and accepted the Chancellorship.

The task thus placed on him was so great that it required all his time, and he was therefore forced to resign his pastorates. This action brought forth the following resolutions from Antioch church:

“ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH,
Sept. 14th, 1878.

At a called meeting of the church, the following preamble and resolutions were adopted.

Whereas, a communication addressed this church by Elder P. H. Mell, D.D., notifying us that circumstances beyond his control, necessitated the painful duty of tendering and asking the immediate acceptance of his resignation of the pastorate of the same, Therefore,

Resolved. 1st—That trusting that He who does all things well, and according to the council of His own will, is directing in wisdom the course of this event, we accept the resignation with minds and hearts shrouded in sadness as we part with one whom we have learned to love so much—who has been so faithful and kind as pastor, brother and friend.

Resolved. 2nd—That our hearts swell with gratitude at the signal honor of his ministry in our midst, for, truly, God has given wonderful success to his efforts in building up and establishing His Kingdom on the earth; and we doubt not many a gem will deck his crown of victory in that day when the Master shall gather His jewels.

Resolved. 3rd—That it is no cold or formal farewell that we give him, but that this church and community, follow him wherever his lot be cast, with the warmest,

best, and most sincere wishes of our hearts; praying that his life and health may be precious in the sight of the Master, and that he may be spared long to his dear family and friends, and be instrumental in accomplishing much good for coming generations.

Resolved. 4th—That being impressed with his wonderful usefulness to our church and community, and of the very endearing relations existing as pastor and people, it is with sorrow and regret that we sever these ties; and though we may never have the privilege to greet him again as pastor, yet we hope to meet him on the shores of spiritual deliverance where these sad farewells are unknown and where the bonds of union are so strong as never to be broken.

Resolved. 5th—This preamble and resolutions be spread upon our minutes and a copy of the same be forwarded to Brother Mell.

By order of the church, September 14th, 1878.

M. W. EDWARDS,
Moderator.

C. J. LANDRUM,
Church Clerk."

At the time he assumed the Chancellorship, as already stated, the University had suffered materially in patronage. The number of students had decreased from 344 in 1869 and 312 in 1873, to 161 in 1877 and 116 in 1878. The attendance at once began to improve and by 1884 Dr. Mell had succeeded in counteracting the downward tendency and the number of students in that year increased to 203. Before he was elected Chancellor the Board of Trustees passed a law abolishing secret fraternities in the University, because it was asserted by the authorities that these organizations were detrimental to the Lit-

erary Societies and in some other respects injured the University. Stringent measures were adopted to enforce the law and a war was immediately declared between the Faculty and the Secret Fraternities. Not being local, but extending all over the United States, these Societies received sympathy and support from outside influences that were by no means insignificant. These antagonisms could only result in great injury to the University and accomplish no good.

The rule as printed in the catalogue of 1877 reads as follows:

“By the act of matriculation every student pledges himself to join no secret society other than the Demosthenian or Phi Kappa Societies, during his stay in the college.”

Before Dr. Mell would accept the position of Chancellor, he stipulated, among other things, that the above rule must be rescinded and the secret fraternities allowed to open chapters at the University. He believed it was unwise to fight these organizations on account of their non-local features, and for the same reason they could be made powerful influences for the University's good. His conservative management of these matters brought back confidence and the number of students gradually increased until it went above the two hundred mark.

CHAPTER XVII.

DORMITORY SYSTEM.

In 1878 the Board of Trustees passed a law requiring a Dormitory System to be inaugurated in the University of Georgia. There were objectionable features and Dr. Mell argued against it but consented to try the plan if the Board insisted, and would furnish him with the necessary facilities to make it successful. This they failed to do but enacted instead a law which if enforced he felt would wreck the University.

The following extracts taken from the Chancellor's Annual Report for 1880, thoroughly explain this very important matter in the history of the Institution.

"As soon as I arrived at a definite conclusion as to what was my duty in the premises, I addressed to every member of the Board, through the Secretary, the following communication:

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA,
ATHENS, GA., *August 9, 1879.*

HON. WM. L. MITCHELL, LL.D., Secretary Board of
Trustees, University of Georgia:

Dear Sir: On my personal application, two days after the adjournment of the Board of Trustees, you were kind enough to furnish me a copy of the action of that body on

the subject of the method of discipline in the University, as follows:

“DORMITORY SYSTEM.

“After careful consideration, your Committee recommend the following action:

“1. That the house on Lumpkin Street be taken possession of, and be let, rent free, to some proper person who will take students as day boarders.

“2. That the Prudential Committee shall have both the College Dormitory Buildings thoroughly repaired and cleaned, and the students be required to occupy them, with the following exceptions:

“1. All students residing in Athens.

“2. The members of the Senior Class who shall prefer to room in town.

“3. All students who shall bring the written request of their parents or guardians, asking that they be allowed to room in town.

“With these exceptions, the Faculty are instructed to require other students to room in the College Dormitories.”

It distresses me to have to announce to you that it is morally impossible for me to comply with the above legislation. Of course, in taking such extreme ground as this, I recognize that I can be justified only on the principle of invincible necessity—a necessity, too, that must be made apparent to you and the other members of the Board of Trustees. Before attempting to give my reasons, however, let me relieve the subject from two irrelevancies.

First. I do not propose to make any issues with the Board, or with any member of it. I have the highest respect for that honorable body, and for all the distinguished gentlemen who compose it. They have never, as a body, so far as I know and believe, done me any intentional wrong or harm; but have, on the contrary, brought me under many and very great obligations. They elected me first, to a professorship, and then again to the Chancel-

lorship, without my being in either case, a candidate for office. During all the twenty-three years of my connection with them they have treated me with kindness and consideration; and their generosity toward me, when I was disabled and well-nigh dead with nervous prostration, has brought me under a debt of gratitude which I shall ever feel, and at all times and in all ways be proud to acknowledge. There is no controversy between me and the Board of Trustees, as there are no just grounds of variance between me and any of the able and distinguished citizens that compose it. Let it be distinctly understood, then, that this is not an arraignment of the honorable Board of Trustees as a body, nor of any individuals that constitute it; but a respectful—perhaps I may say an imploring, though I hope manly—appeal to the members to do what they can to rescue me and the University from the impossibilities that environ us.

Second. This is no case of intentional disobedience to law. I admit and maintain that the Trustees, when assembled in an organized body, are the highest authority in the University; and that their enactments, in their letter and in their spirit, must be obeyed by the Chancellor so long as he continues in office. He may not disregard them; he may not intentionally evade them. True, if laws enacted may seem to the Chancellor to be pernicious or impracticable, he may escape responsibility by resigning. If the law-making power in that event should prefer the measure to the officer, it is under moral obligation to release him immediately; for it would be in violation of all right and propriety to attempt to force one to execute a law that, as in this case, is in violation of his reason, his experience and his conscience—that jeopardizes his reputation, and that will certainly wreck his administration.

But, it may be asked, why I did not, when the Board was here, and why I do not now, relieve myself by resignation? I answer, because I am and have been environed by impossibility. On account of the extraordinary conception (if any at all) that the Board have of the relations

the Chancellor and Faculty bear toward them, while they are engaged in legislation, I did not know their action in the premises until after their adjournment. Neither officially nor unofficially, directly nor indirectly, was I informed or given reason to suspect that the Board had such a proposition under consideration; for the measure adopted was altogether a different thing from that against which I had argued in my annual report. This I had heard had been voted down; and the rumor had reached me that the form of College Government which I had recommended, and for the last year administered, had been adopted by a majority of one; but I did not know that the vote had been reconsidered and the present plan substituted, until the Trustees had dispersed. Had their action come to my notice in time, I should have tendered my resignation immediately, respectfully but peremptorily: for nothing could induce me to assume the responsibility of administering the present system.

But it may be asked again why I do not resign now? You, sir, can answer that question. You will bear me witness that I offered the resignation to you, but you declined to receive it on the ground that I could not be released now, since the law required me to give twelve months' notice.

This is no attempt to disobey or evade law, but a recognition of the impossibilities that surround me, and a frank statement of them through you to the able and distinguished and just individuals who compose the Board. If an enemy had done it—if the hand of malignity, with consummate skill and malice aforethought, had provided and disposed the obstructions—I could not have been more thoroughly hemmed in than I have been by the excellent gentlemen who have given me hitherto, so much of kindness and confidence. By their action they have placed me between the horns of an inexorable dilemma. If I carry into effect their legislation, I inaugurate a system that will ruin the boys and young men confided to me; that will bring disaster upon the University, and that will wreck my administration. If I omit to carry their

enactment into effect, I seem to be disobedient to law and discourteous to them; and by their failure to inform me of their action previous to their adjournment, they have made it impossible for me, by resignation, to extricate myself under the forms of law.

Let no one, then, uncandidly make appeal to prejudice, by asserting or intimating that this is a determined attempt to disregard law, and to overthrow legitimate authority.

But what is there in the system that justifies me in taking such extreme ground?

First. I object to the very essence and genius of the system.

1. Because of the peril to which it subjects the moral character of the student. It requires young men and boys to occupy large dormitories in large numbers, with no officers or other influences to protect them or restrain them. In this respect it is a new thing, unlike the old and obsolete Dormitory System proper, and unlike anything that has been hitherto tried. Young men may have been, in some unfortunate localities, thoughtlessly *permitted* to assemble together in large numbers, in detached buildings, away from the constraining influences of authority, and from the conservative influences of home and virtuous female society; but never before, in the history of colleges in all times, have unsophisticated boys been *forced*, by wise and Christian men, to occupy such positions of peril. In such dormitories, organized vice would entrench itself and hold high carnival. Drunkenness and gambling and licentiousness would there fix their permanent headquarters. This is not the Dormitory System, the Trustees voted to adopt a year ago, and against which I argued in my annual report, but the result of a compromise, intended to harmonize the members of the Board; and adopted at the very close of the session, as a substitute for a measure that they had carefully considered early in the session, and by majority vote approved; and which for this purpose had been reconsidered. It may have been very effective in reconciling the views and feel-

ings of the members of the Board, but it will be very potent in working discord and destruction to the University community if put into effect.

I beg again to call attention to the fact that this system is entirely different from that against which I argued, and which I promised to attempt to administer if the Trustees insisted on it; *provided* that they would supply for it the essential agencies. The Board have not insisted on the plan referred to, but have adopted another. Of course, then, my conditional promise falls with the condition on which it was suspended. There is no longer any promise of mine to attempt, on any conditions, to administer any kind of Dormitory System.

2. I object again because the system furnishes occasions the least favorable to studiousness and advancement in scholarship. These dormitories will be the places where the sensations will be found, and will furnish resorts at all hours for the idle and the vicious from all parts of the town. Force compels the young men and boys to lodge there, but there is no government enthroned to protect them from encroachment and interruption.

Second. I object not only to the genius of the system, but to *its details* also.

1. An unwise and unjust distinction is made between students. Some are under duress, while others are free; some are forced to occupy the dormitories, others, no more deserving, are permitted to room where they please. The boys whose parents have no confidence in the wisdom or discretion of the College authorities are rewarded by being accorded the largest liberty; while those whose parents confide in us are treated as if they are imbeciles or inferiors, and virtually punished for the misplaced confidence of parents or guardians. The system then would give us two classes of students—the superior and the inferior, the free and those in duress. Surely, reason and justice would say, if we *must* have an enforced Dormitory System, let it embrace everybody.

2. Again, another strange anomaly is, that the Senior Class is excused from the operation of the system. No

officers are to room in the buildings with the boys, to restrain them; and, to make it worse, no experienced student—one who has met with the difficulties and dangers to character and mastered them—is required or expected to be present, to exercise an influence over them. The members of the Senior Class are morally acclimated, their characters are formed; and, if they were present, they might establish and maintain a correct and mature public opinion, that might assert some conservative power. But here all College authority is withheld, and all, or nearly all, College conservative influence dismissed, and the inexperienced boys, sons of those who confide in me, are forced into those relations which promise good neither to morals nor to mind.

Finally, the system promises, in the matter of discipline and order, nothing but confusion and riot. In the first place, the boys are forced into the buildings, but there is no power present there to govern them. In the next place, if nature is in them, they will resent what will appear to them to be outrageous distinctions made between them and others; and the deterioration of character, which the system will produce in them, will be ready, in vicious ways, to lend aid to their resentment.

These being my views as to the character and inevitable tendencies of the system, my conscience (I say it with profound respect) will not permit me, either actively or passively, to be a party to its inauguration here.

A weighty consideration, influencing gentlemen of the Board in their action, may have been that, under my system and in my hands, a large building, in which has been invested no small amount of money, would be shut up and useless. This is a great mistake. The system which I would administer needs all the buildings on the campus. We have a plan which will unify and utilize all the houses that we have. I did not present it or allude to it in my report, because motives of delicacy and prudence prompted me to wait until the Board had taken definite and final action on the "Dormitory System."

Hoping that it will be in your power to serve every

member of the Board with a copy of this communication,
I subscribe myself,

With profound respect, your obedient servant,

P. H. MELL,

Chancellor University of Georgia."

Copies of this letter to Dr. W. L. Mitchell, mentioned in the report above published, were sent to all the members of the Board of Trustees, and called forth from them a number of replies, some commending, others condemning. Two of these letters from the President of the Board are printed below to indicate how deep the feeling was on both sides of the question at issue.

"AUGUSTA, GA., October 4th, 1879.

REV. P. H. MELL,

Chancellor, University of Georgia.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your communication of the 9th of August last, to the Secretary of the University of Georgia, accompanied by a request that a copy be sent to each member of the Board, has reached me and has induced much painful consideration, resulting in a conviction that it was my duty to convene the Board. I have accordingly ordered a meeting on the 29th inst.

It is not my purpose now to discuss this unpleasant matter with you, but simply to suggest, in all kindness and respect, that it may be expedient that you should be in Atlanta at that time, as the Board may desire to communicate with you either by committee or in full session. I make this suggestion in memory of your very valuable services to the Institution in the past, in consideration of fair promises of good results to the Institution given by the past year of your Chancellorship, in full acceptance of your disclaimer of intentional disrespect to the Board,

and in the earnest hope that by conference in mutual kindness and candor, an escape may be found from this dilemma which I cannot but regard as serious.

Very respectfully, etc.,

C. J. JENKINS."

To this letter the following reply was made:

"CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE,
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA,
ATHENS, GA., October 7th, 1897.

HON. C. J. JENKINS,

President, Board of Trustees, University of Georgia.

DEAR SIR:

I have received yours of the 4th instant, in which you inform me that you have 'ordered a meeting (of the Board of Trustees) at Atlanta, on the 29th instant.' I have also been permitted to read the manuscript text of that order. I have most respectfully to request that you will modify the terms of that call. I beg leave to assure you that I am not in antagonism with the Board of Trustees, and that I do *not* mean to refuse or neglect to carry into effect any enactment of theirs. This I am prepared to show both by word and action on the occasion furnished by your call. Excuse me for saying that your card seems to prejudge the case and to condemn me without a hearing. Its publication will do me great injustice, and it may spring an unfortunate discussion in the newspapers; for some indiscreet friend of mine, knowing that I am misunderstood, may unfortunately attempt to defend me. The public have nothing to do with this question, and there is really no issue between me and the Board of Trustees, whatever may be the appearances.

Please, therefore, Sir, let your call be a mere technical one, without tone or coloring, and couched in such terms as to make it impossible for inferences to be drawn unfavorable to anybody. For I assure you there is no conflict between me and the Board of Trustees, and I stand ready, as hitherto, to do all in my power to enable that honor-

able body to carry out all its wishes with reference to the University.

There is no man on earth who more thoroughly commands my esteem and admiration than yourself, and there is no one whose approbation would be more gratifying to me. Please, therefore, do not, even by inference, by the terms of your call unnecessarily throw the influence of your great name against me in advance

Your obedient servant,

P. H. MELL."

Governor Jenkins replied to this letter as follows:

"AUGUSTA, 27th of October, 1879

REV. P. H. MELL, D.D., LL.D.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your letter of the 7th instant, by some mischance, did not reach me until the 24th.

Believe me, nothing was further from my intention in the call for a special meeting of the Board of Trustees, sent to the Secretary, than to excite prejudice against you or to throw my personal influence, great or small, against you.

It has been my practice in calling such meetings (adopted from a conviction of its propriety) to indicate the cause inducing the call, as I did in this instance.

I alluded to conflict between the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees regarding a disciplinary law, passed by the latter at the last summer meeting, resulting in a refusal of the former to execute or attempt to execute that law.

Now let me premise two things:—1st. I was absent from that meeting and all my information on the subject under consideration was derived from your communication of the 9th of August to the Secretary with a request that he transmit a copy thereof to each member of the Board, which reached me at a distant point in another State.

2nd. That the conflict or antagonism (I think I used the former word) to which I referred in the call had no reference to any thing personal on either side, not even to permanent irreconcilable disagreement however originating, but simply to practical matter of fact disagreement. Can there be two opinions as to the existence of this fact? You give in your circular of the 9th of August the text of the new law, which is all the information I have on the subject. Alluding to this law you say: "It distresses me to have to communicate to you that it is morally impossible for me to comply with the above legislation." Again you say, "It would be in violation of all right to attempt to force me to execute a law that, as in this case, is in violation of his reason, his experience and his conscience." Again, "Nothing would induce me to assume the responsibility of administering the present system." And still again, "If I carry into effect this legislation I inaugurate a system that will ruin the boys and young men confided to me, that will bring disaster upon the University and that will wreck my administration." And yet again, "My conscience (I say it with profound respect) will not permit me either actively or passively to be a party to its inauguration here."

Here then we have the Board of Trustees speaking through their statute the text of which you have furnished me and you speaking of the character of that statute, as you regard it, and declaring, and repeating your determination not to carry it into effect. So there then is no conflict between the Board and the Chancellor, no refusal by him to execute their law? Bear in mind that I have not characterized that conflict in any way in my call, have imputed blame to neither party. I cannot see in it all any thing but serious conflict of opinion . . . and the existence of that conflict I made the basis of my call.

It was my intention when I made the call to attend the meeting, if my health permitted, and, as intimated in my former letter, to unite with all similarly disposed in finding a way of escape from the dilemma, without prejudice

to either the Board or the Chancellor and without rupture of their existing relations.

I am not unmindful of the manly course you took promptly to relieve yourself by resignation, nor am I insensible to the embarrassment in which you felt yourself when you found that door closed against you. I do not at all question the rectitude of your intentions in all you have done. Still there was, and is, in my view, the simple act of conflict, which is anomalous, so far as I know, unprecedented, and demanding early action, for which reason I made it the basis of my call. I found also in your communication early and earnest appeal to the Board, to rescue you and the University from the embarrassing status. No word or line has passed between myself and any member of the Board, save our worthy Secretary and one other gentleman, who made a written request that I would call a meeting.

Upon finding that the concurrence of two members with the President was necessary I revoked the call and informed the gentleman of it. So far I have received no other. I do not now suppose there will be any. Should there be I will endeavor to so word it as to avoid the inferences you seem to think might be drawn from the language of the first.

Believe me, Sir, nothing would pain me more than to find I had said or done anything to injure you in any way or wound your sensibilities.

Very respectfully yours,

C. J. JENKINS."

In the reply that follows, Dr. Mell indicates how important it is that there should be a free and full consultation between the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees, so necessary for the best welfare of the Institution in which both have a vital interest.

There is no possible chance for success in the

development of the University unless the Chancellor is fully aware of all contemplated enactments relating to the discipline and vital organisms of the Institution, and his judgment should be consulted by the Board before the final vote is taken. He has been appointed to the position because of his recognized ability to manage with distinguished credit, the trust in his charge. His constant presence on the grounds, and daily study of all interests relating to the University, better qualify him for safe and wise counsel than can be possible with any member of the Board of Trustees whose time, between the annual meetings, is wholly taken up with other subjects that have but little, if any, connection with college and University work. With this idea in view the following letter will be read with interest.

“UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA,

October 31st, 1879.

HON. C. J. JENKINS,

President of Board of Trustees University of Ga.

DEAR SIR:

Your very kind and satisfactory letter of the 27th inst. has been received. Accept my thanks.

The only object I have in view is to enable the Board of Trustees to establish a Dormitory System, if they desire, *without sharing with them in the responsibility*. The only right I have been endeavoring to exercise is *the right to resign*. If I had been a slave or a subject, I should have been compelled to submit to the law; if I had been a soldier, it would have been my duty to obey it as an order; if I had been an executive of a state or a nation, it would have been imperative on me to enforce it as an enactment.

But I am a *voluntary agent*, responsible for every thing I voluntarily consent to carry into effect, and competent to escape responsibility by resignation. I am not resisting the Trustees. They shall not be obstructed by me, if they give me the privilege to escape complications. With this subject in view, and solely for this reason, I put all members of the Board on notice of my difficulties, *six weeks before the opening of the term*, with the hope they would assemble during the vacation, and—in the event they overruled my objections and adhered to their enactment—give me the opportunity to resign and retire immediately. Unfortunately they did not allow me to be heard on the law before they adopted it; and then after adopting it, they did not inform me of it before they adjourned that I might have decided to assume responsibility for it by consenting to execute it, or escape such responsibility by resigning. But they did not consult me at all; and I did not know of the enactment until after their adjournment. Now, I know the Board did not mean to be unkind to me. The whole difficulty originated in the fact that, at the moment, they did not recognize that I was a voluntary agent, responsible as well as they, and that they had not formally considered an important question—viz: What relation does the Chancellor bear to the Board of Trustees when that body is engaged in legislation; while it is making or modifying organisms in the University which compromise that officer, by affecting the discipline which he is to enforce? All, or nearly all, the irregularities and confusion here in times past have grown out of the fact that that question has not been settled to the satisfaction of all parties. Certain it is the present difficulty originates nowhere else. If there had not been an (unintentional) violation of this, as yet, unwritten law, I could not possibly have had an opportunity or pretext for pursuing a course which, though legal in my judgment, may possibly be offensive to some of the Trustees, and the necessity for which has been a source of great distress to me.

With my views of the dangerous character of the sys-

tem adopted, and with my desire to escape all responsibility for it, there was but one safe legal course for me to pursue. I availed myself, therefore, of that provision of law which authorized you to call an extra meeting at the instance of two members, and virtually put all the members on notice of the necessity of it. If a meeting had been called *before the responsibilities of a new year were assumed* the Trustees could have had their own way without resistance or obstruction from me; and I could have escaped all responsibility under the forms of law. Unfortunately, it is too late now to remove embarrassment with safety. The students have been allowed to make their own arrangements without reference to the Dormitories; and an attempt to undo what has been done might place the University in the chapter of accidents.

As soon as I received your notification of a meeting called for the 29th instant I proceeded to prepare a paper to be presented to the Board. In this I discuss the subject in all its relations; and endeavor to answer that important question. This paper, after a time, I may have printed, according to a provision of law, but at my own expense. In that event I shall serve every member of the Board with a copy, in advance of the annual meeting. I would do so at once but for fear that some might suppose I desire a meeting to be held now. This, for the reason given above, might be embarrassing (not to me but) to the University.

This letter demands no reply. Hoping the gravity of the occasion and subject will justify me with you for writing you so long a letter, I subscribe myself

With great respect,

Your obedient servant,

P. H. MELL."

Governor Jenkins issued a call for a meeting of the Board of Trustees to consider the question brought before them by the position of the Chancellor on the Dormitory System. After receiv-

ing the published copy of the report, mentioned in preceding pages of this book, this call was countermanded and the entire question was deferred until the regular meeting in July, 1880. In the meantime the Prudential Committee suspended the enforcement of the rule for the session then in progress.

At the meeting of the Board in 1880, the rule relating to the Dormitory System was reconsidered and defeated and the University was tided over the breakers in safety. Chancellor P. H. Mell had no more trouble with this matter as long as he was connected with the Institution.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ELECTION AS PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN MERCER UNIVERSITY.

On the 30th of June, 1882, Dr. Mell received notice from a committee of the Board of Trustees of Mercer University that he had been elected Professor of Theology in that Institution. This information was conveyed in the following letter.

“DR. P. H. MELL.

DEAR BROTHER:

The undersigned committee were appointed by the Board of Trustees of Mercer University to communicate to you your election by them to a Theological Professorship, and to urge your acceptance of it.

For the better understanding of the action taken, we transmit you a copy of the resolutions adopted.

Resolved. 1. That a chair of Systematic Theology be at once reorganized, and that Dr. P. H. Mell be elected to the chair, with a salary of two thousand dollars, provided that the amount shall be paid without using the endowment or funds hereafter appropriated to other objects.

Resolved. 2. That the salary of the said Professor, till otherwise provided for, be raised by securing contributions from churches and individuals, and by such pledges as will guarantee the certainty of its payment.

Resolved. 3. That an agent be immediately put into the field to raise, in addition to the annual requirement of said Professor, an endowment of \$35,000, the income of which to be exclusively applied to the support of said chair. The said agent shall also be charged with the

duty of canvassing for students, and receiving contributions to any other object connected with the University.

Pledges were immediately made by individuals, securing for five years the annual payment of about \$700; a new fund of \$4,000 was appropriated to the chair to serve as a nucleus of the future endowment, the income of which when invested, will make the amount already secured for salary about \$1,000. It is confidently hoped that in this way the payment of salary is placed beyond contingency.

The committee indulge the earnest hope that you will accept the position tendered, and thus gratify the wish of the great body of Baptists in the State to have you identified with them in their educational enterprise.

Fraternally yours,

JAMES G. RYALS,

J. H. DEVOTIE,

H. C. HORNADY,

J. G. GIBSON,

E. W. WARREN,

Committee."

The following is also of interest in this connection, because Rev. J. H. Campbell, the father of the author of this letter was a member of the Board of Trustees of Mercer University that expelled Dr. Mell from position in the Institution in 1855, and took a very active part in accomplishing this most unfortunate object. For many years thereafter the old gentleman had earnestly opposed Dr. Mell in his efforts to establish himself with the Baptists of the State.

"COLUMBUS, GA., June 29th, 1882.

DEAR BROTHER MELL:

In spite of the opposition of some of us, on grounds of present expediency, the Trustees of Mercer

resolved yesterday, by a large majority, to reestablish the Theological Chair at once. To the Professor elect to that position I am so far to being opposed, that this writing is to express my earnest desire that he will accept the office, and to assure him of my cordial support of the professorship and the Professor. My father also, on account of whose sickness I was summoned home by telegraph to-night, requests me to say that if he were on the Board he would have voted for you, and now joins me in the above request for your most favorable consideration of the matter.

The financial condition and outlook of Mercer are decidedly encouraging as compared with latter years. Most of the Trustees seem confident there will be no lack of funds for the payment of your salary in the position tendered you.

Very respectfully and truly

Your brother,

A. B. CAMPBELL."

The action of the Board of Trustees of Mercer and the above letter from Rev. A. B. Campbell were very gratifying to Dr. Mell because he felt that the injustice of 1855 was partially rectified even after long years of waiting. He deemed it best however, to decline the call to the Theological Chair in Mercer for the reasons assigned in the following reply to the committee of the Board of Trustees:

"ATHENS, GA., July 6th, 1882.

DEAR BRETHREN:

Your letter of the 30th ultimo informing me that the Trustees of Mercer University had elected me to the reorganized Chair of Theology in that Institution, profoundly touched my feelings. As an original proposition, no work would be more congenial to me than that

pertaining to a Theological Chair; and this expression of confidence and appreciation by my own people excites lively feelings of satisfaction. But previous engagements not uncongenial, and, in a measure, binding, and the fact that the salary offered even guaranteed by endowment, would not be sufficient to support my large and expensive family, require me to respectfully decline the position so flatteringly tendered me.

It will give me the greatest pleasure by word and deed to assist you so far as I can, towards the adequate endowment of the proposed reorganized Chair of Theology.

Thanking you, brethren, for the kind terms in which you have conveyed to me the action of the Board, I subscribe myself

Yours truly and fraternally,

P. H. MELL."

In writing to Dr. M. B. Wharton in 1881, who had urged him to permit his name to go before the Board, provided this chair was established, he makes the following statement:

"I have a large and expensive family. In my present position I receive \$3,000, payable quarterly, and the stately and convenient house I live in, free of rent. My salary is virtually \$3,600 per year. The position I occupy is one of the highest honor, influence and usefulness; and I am most happy in it. I am held in all the consideration I deserve or ask, by Trustees, Faculty, students and people. All parties co-operate with me, and strive to make me happy and successful. Were my people (the Baptists) united on me, and did they have already an endowed Chair of Theology with ample resources, and did they compete with the parties here for my services, offering equivalent pecuniary inducements, my preference to be a teacher of theology and to labor with my own people would soon decide the question. But these are not the facts. The Baptists have no endowed Chair of Theology

which they could offer to anybody. Then, again, even if they had, the representatives of my people could not be brought to agree unanimously to offer it to me. Twenty-six years ago they expelled me from such service—i.e., as a Teacher in their Institution, and those who were prominent in that act are still leading spirits in the present management of the Institution. While these are very kind in their personal relations with me, your letter shows you infer that they are not prepared to favor the object you have in view. You see, then the impossibility connected with the attempt to answer your questions.

1. The proposition implies that I must be virtually a candidate for position in Mercer University, though I had been ignominiously expelled from it.

2. That I must immediately vacate my position here before another is provided for me at the other Institution; for

3. It contains the idea that funds are to be solicited on the ground that I agree to accept provided the endowment is raised—and personal dignity and personal safety would require I make my resignation here simultaneous with that announcement. Finally,

4. Such an implied pledge by me would virtually bind me to accept the position whether the endowment was raised or not, or else keep me indefinitely out of employment, and consequently without the means of support for my large and expensive family. The fact is you are not in a condition to put the question to me, and it is evident I am not in a condition to answer it."

The news that he had been elected to the Chair of Theology in Mercer University had gone over the entire State and letters came from every quarter—some from the friends of Mercer urging Dr. Mell to accept the position, and others from the friends of the State University requesting

him to decline the call, for the sake of the welfare of the University.

He would have been greatly pleased if it had been within his power to accept the Chair of Theology in Mercer University, because he loved to preach to young men the truths of the Bible, and he availed himself of many opportunities to profess before them the great love he bore his Master. During his administration as Chancellor of the University of Georgia he lectured each Sunday afternoon before the young men, and these discourses were marked for their logical force and for language so clear, striking and interesting that they made a deep impression upon the minds of his hearers.

As the years gathered around him his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ became stronger, and his sermons were remarkable for the clear light they shed upon the subject of the Atonement. His sermons always held the profound attention of his audiences. The deep earnestness of the man as the clear, forcible sentences fell from his lips, always carried conviction; and his utterances elicited the highest praise and admiration from those of his brethren who were well qualified to appreciate work of a high order of merit. Many of his discourses have been requested for publication by the Conventions and Associations before which they were delivered.

The following newspaper extract, describing

a sermon preached by him during the session of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1880, is given as an example of the effect his style produced upon his hearers. It is one among many similar articles giving praise to his clear, logical, tender, simple, rich presentation of the gospel.

“LEXINGTON, KY., May 7th.

The old Empire State must have felt her ears burn to-night, for hundreds of people at Lexington are saying good things about her. The Rev. Dr. P. H. Mell, who we this morning elected President of the Convention, preached to-night the introductory sermon. To the astonishment and delight of the immense audience gathered from seventeen or eighteen States, the text was one of those passages called by Martin Luther *little Bibles*, ‘God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.’ The grand idea of the sermon is compressed in the single prose quotation taken outside the Bible: ‘The four manifestations of Christ in the New Testament are, Christ manifested for us; Christ manifested in us, Christ manifested by us, and Christ manifested with us.’ The simplicity, the crystal clearness, the tender and indescribable grace of manner, and the unaffected sincerity that must have been marked by all present, made this one of the noblest efforts ever put forth by a son of Georgia. This is high praise, doubtless, but it is every whit true and needs no abatement.

There he stood before the great throng, and his tall form seemed clothed about with dignity and majesty, while his silvered beard and hair seemed in the brilliant light, heaven’s glistening token of Christ’s ambassador praying men in Christ’s stead to be reconciled to God.

There he stood, telling ‘without money and without price’ and ‘in words as sweet as those that angels use,’ to

a vast audience that listened breathless to his every utterance, the answer to the old and tremendous question, 'What must I do to be saved?'

At the self-same hour in Louisville, and likewise to a crowded house, but to one that had left for him many hundred dollars at the door, 'the champion plagiarist of the nineteenth century' was giving a false answer to the same question, such an one as make the perjurer, the blasphemer, the gambler, the adulterer and seducer, bless him from unclean hearts and with polluted lips to which naught is sacred, in the heaven above or in the earth beneath.

Who can contrast the two scenes without recalling the invitation and the question of Isaiah, spoken thousands of years ago, 'Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not?'

After dismissal many crowded around the preacher to express their gratitude, and turned from him to clasp the hands of their unknown fellow Christians, waiving for the first time, all necessity for formal introduction. A minister present expressed what all felt: 'Oh, how this sermon makes us all love one another.'"

CHAPTER XIX.

EFFORTS TOWARDS COMPLETING THE TECHNOLOGICAL SCHOOL AS A DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA.

At the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the University of Georgia in 1882, Chancellor Mell, in his annual report, urged the completion of the Technological School as a Department of the University of Georgia, in order to finish the organization of the State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts. He pointed out to them that they had already four departments of the Technological School at Athens, well equipped with laboratories for practical instruction. All that was needed to make the college comply with the United States law, therefore, was a Mechanical Department, where practical work in wood and iron could be carried on under the direction of a master mechanic.

The Trustees heartily approved of the plans submitted by the Chancellor, and they instructed him to bring the subject before the Governor and the Legislature and ask for a sufficient appropriation with which to purchase the necessary machinery and outfit for the Mechanical Laboratory. In compliance with this request he addressed a

communication to Governor Colquitt and petitioned him to urge the Legislature to make the appropriation. This the Governor did in his annual report; but the State Treasury not being in a condition to warrant the outlay that year, the Legislature failed to act favorably on the bill.

In July, 1883, the subject was again introduced before the Board of Trustees in the annual report of the Chancellor, and, on motion of Col. Billups, it was

“Resolved, That so much of the Chancellor’s report as relates to the School of Technology, and such elaboration of that subject as he may deem advisable, be furnished the *Atlanta Constitution* for publication at once.”

This was done and the extract appeared in the paper the next day.

Again, in July, 1884, he brought the subject before the Board and urged them to take decided steps in getting the Legislature to supply the money needed to enable them to establish the School of Technology. In response to this they passed the following:

“In relation to the School of Technology we can only repeat the recommendation of the Board, and urge the committee appointed to wait on the General Assembly, to present to that body the advantages possessed by this University as a location for the School, and urge the appropriation of such amount as will establish and equip such a school as a part of the University where the State has buildings.”

It will be noticed from all these facts thus related, that Dr. Mell was the first to agitate the opening of workshops in connection with the University, some years even, before the Harris bill was introduced in the Legislature. After the passage of Mr. Harris' bill, Dr. Mell used every legitimate influence to have the Technological School located at Athens. And when he failed to accomplish this purpose he said to the writer, "the University has been given a mortal wound." He asserted that the effort would be made very soon to remove the Agricultural and Chemical Departments from Athens, and the noble old Institution would then be remanded back to Franklin College, as it was in 1857. He did not live to see the fulfillment of this prediction, but part of it has come to pass in the location of the Experiment Station at Griffin.

CHAPTER XX.

COLLEGE GOVERNMENT.

Dr. Mell had a wonderful power in winning the hearts of the students and most of them loved him. His whole theory of college government, so far as it related to the control of the pupil, was based on this power. He used to say that it was barbarous to make boys obey through fear, and that the man who could not control them by kind treatment and affection, but rather had to resort to harsh measures, was not competent to be placed in charge of a great University. He said that most young men who came to college had the instincts of the gentleman in them and should be treated as such; and his experience was that where the boys were so treated they were prompt to respond in like manner. The boy should be taught to do right, not because he feared the consequences of doing wrong, but because he loved to do right; and the teacher must be obeyed not because the pupil feared his anger but because the pupil loved the teacher and found great pleasure in obeying him.

This was the principle upon which he based his government, and acting upon it he mingled with the boys as much as possible, entered into

all their plans, was their friend and adviser, looking after their interests, protecting their rights, seeing to their comforts, admonishing, rebuking, encouraging, guiding, always firm, courteous and gentle, but at the same time the master hand that shaped, controlled and blessed their lives.

In his long career of nearly sixty years as a teacher, thousands of young men have been educated under him. They are scattered far and wide all over the United States, and from all quarters come expressions of admiration and respect. A few tributes from the number have been selected to show the impression he made upon his pupils.

“The boys loved him because of his gentleness and strength. Nothing could break his will when once made up; but his decisions were never hasty and his dealings were all devoid of prejudice and partiality. He was a leader of men. The discipline of the University, as befitted an institution of its breadth and design, was never close or inquisitorial, but the Chancellor’s command of the boys was perfect, and when he showed his authority, on proper occasions, his wisdom and firmness were beyond question. Whenever a student knew Dr. Mell he loved him, and there are thousands of Georgians to-day who hear with sorrowful hearts of his decease.” (Editorial in *Augusta Chronicle*.)

“His government of young men was based upon self-respect and obedience to authority. He held it fundamental that if an Institution could not ennoble and better the student, it had no right to disgrace him. While he enforced the penalty of disobedience when the offense was

aggravated, he refused to expel; but had the parent, at an opportune time, to withdraw the student from college.

The consequence has been that among the young men who attended the University no professor or chancellor had probably so justly deserved and won the popularity and respect of the students. And in this broad commonwealth, when the sad intelligence of his death is conveyed to those who knew and loved him, tribute will be offered to the many virtues of the distinguished dead." (Charles Z. McCord.)

"I am deeply grieved at the news of his death. I sat under him as professor during my three years at the University, and learned to love him then. Since that time I have been closely associated with him as trustee, and have never known a more admirable man." (Henry W. Grady.)

"He was a perfect gentleman, in the highest sense of that term. There was no kind of force used by him in the government and control of students, except that which might be called in the strictest sense of the term, moral force. It operated alone on the gentlemanly instincts of the students, and so great was its influence that during the two and a half years I spent under his tuition I never knew or heard of anyone, even the worst, who did not yield to it." (Judge W. R. Hammond.)

"If, as Pope says, the proper study of mankind is man, what a rich volume we have before us.

Dr. Mell's house was always open to the boys who were away from paternal influence. The first time that ever the speaker saw Dr. Mell was in the little college chapel at Athens, when he read the 19th Psalm, and closed his prayer with the last words of that sweet poem: 'Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.' It seemed to me ever afterwards to be the motto of his character, the watchword of his life. No prayer did he pray but was opened or closed with it.

Whenever I saw Dr. Mell it seemed to be written in his face, and when I heard his voice, those sentiments, in imagination, glowed out as a part of his very breath. It has always been as if that verse was peculiarly his own. His thoughts and all bore the impress of that prayer of the Psalmist.

Whatever professor might be the especial favorite with a student, every one looked up to Dr. Mell as the strong character of the faculty, as the embodiment of honor, as the self-possessed and courageous exemplar for every student, the kind and considerate friend, the ever ready and watchful moral nature to infuse itself into every boy's heart and make it feel that nobility of character that so exemplified itself in him.

No harsh words fell from his lips, no dogmatism, no overbearing displayed itself towards those under him, but he was always the same modest, courteous gentleman that treated the young gentlemen, as he called them, with loving consideration and polite equality. You could not see him without noticing that he was a timid man. You could not be with him without feeling that he was eminently a brave man. There was a bravery in his timidity, but there was no timidity in his bravery.

Given as his life had been to the training of the young, he had thoroughly learned to respect them, which in itself would have commanded a high respect in return. Had the thought of attempting any prank or indiscretion on him entered into the breast of a single boy it would have found no lodgment, for the soul of each one would have rebelled against such action on its part as being the basest ingratitude.

As gentle as a woman, he inspired a chivalric respect from every young man. As brave as was ever plumed knight, he excited unbounded admiration. Cool and deliberate, yet full of order. Relishing keen thrusts of wit, he was always considerate of the feelings of others.

His character was made up of virtues that contrasted, but did not conflict. It was a positive character which you felt to be great, and it unconsciously burned its im-

press on all he taught. And how many have they been? For over fifty years has he taught—thirteen, a professor in Mercer, and thirty-two in the State University—ten of which he was its honored chancellor. Oh, what an occupation and profession! The noblest calling of man or woman.” (Captain J. L. Hardeman.)

“After all, his fame will rest securest upon his wonderful success as an educator of the young men of the South. All over the land, hundreds of the foremost young people of Georgia, when the news of his death goes out, will feel for a time his loss, almost as that of a father. He delighted to call them ‘his boys’ in the familiar talks he often had concerning them—illustrating, as he felt they did in their successes, his own careful training. The blood of the University flowed from his veins into the frame of these, ‘his sons,’ and no one felt prouder of their achievements than he, or gave kindlier advice or sympathy in the days of adversity.

His government of young men was unique and without a parallel. There was no threat of violence—no remonstrance—only the expression of a desire of co-operation on the part of the students in the government of the Institution, nevertheless every member of the classes knew that beneath the soft velvet of his words and manner was the iron will of the governor, the strong, intense and overmastering spirit of the man, that compelled obedience.

He walked among us as one born to rule, and to the recognition of this fact was due the ease with which he held vast parliamentary bodies in check, and carried them through the most trying emergencies of legislation and business. No order was equal to that kept in his recitation room. Large classes of young men—often with members fiery and rebellious—were controlled by him without any apparent effort. The young men themselves were scarcely aware of the intense power that held sway over them. He was not stern; on the contrary his manner invited confidence, and he became the trusted friend

of every student in his charge. No one was ever known to complain against him of injustice. He moved steadily forward, convincing the judgment and commanding the affections of the students, as the basis of obedience.

He carried this method into the government of his own family, which was a large one. Those who have seen him at home can testify to the respect and veneration shown towards him by his children. There was never a kinder father, and yet never one whose word was received with less hesitation, as unquestioned law. To one, inquiring his method of training in this regard, he replied: 'I have taught my children to respect my wishes. They obey me first because I willed it; now, they obey because they love and wish to please me.' He has made no mistake in this particular. He knew his children as he knew men—intuitively, and he adopted his course accordingly." (Editorial in *Macon Telegraph*.)

Many amusing and interesting incidents occurred during his connection with the University that serve to illustrate his watchfulness for the student's welfare, and how his complete control over them enabled him to bring order out of disorder, with an apparent ease that was astonishing, and with a simplicity of manner and absence of all rigid formality that won the admiration of the students.

Just after the war and at the close of the second session, (I think it was in 1866 or 1867), the negroes attempted to take possession of the University for the purpose, as they alleged, of sending their sons to college. They kept their intentions secret until the night of the attack. The final examinations were in progress and

many of the students were up late, on the night in question, preparing for them. Just after midnight, one of the boys, while passing through the campus from town, saw a large crowd of negroes on the street in front of the campus armed with every weapon imaginable. He carefully approached them and learned from what they said that they were going to storm the college buildings where the boys were rooming. As quickly as possible he gave the alarm, and in a very short time all the students, most of whom had been Confederate soldiers, were assembled on the campus. They ordered the negroes to disperse or they would fire into them. The negroes knew, however, they outnumbered the boys three or four to one and they determined to push their advantage and enter into a contest for the possession of the University property. All this trouble occurred within one hundred yards of Dr. Mell's residence, and he was soon informed of the condition of affairs. Hurrying out among the boys he told them to stand firm, but not to fire a single shot until he gave the command. He informed them it would be best for the University, on account of the unsettled condition of the country, to drive the negroes off without bloodshed, if possible, but if that could not be done they would drive them off at all hazards. The boys consented to submit to Dr. Mell's guidance, and he came out in view of

the negroes and demanded the cause of the disturbance. Being informed that they wished to have the same privileges extended their people that were enjoyed by the white people in the University, and that they would not leave the campus until they were assured that this demand would be granted, Dr. Mell said, "Your demand will not be respected, because this is the white man's college, and you are perfectly powerless to help yourselves. You are now surrounded by armed and determined men who are only waiting for my orders to fire into you on every side. If you will quietly disperse and go to your homes you will not be hurt; if you refuse, I will command these men to fire and not one of you will leave this campus alive." This was literally true. The alarm had been sounded throughout the town and the people were coming into the campus from all directions. The negroes finding themselves surrounded and their cause utterly hopeless decided to withdraw. This they were permitted to do by Dr. Mell's advice, without a single gun being fired, although the students and citizens were greatly incensed.

In illustration of his justice towards the students the following incident is related. One of the young men from a neighboring city got into serious trouble that caused his temporary suspension from the University. His father came to Athens to examine into the causes that resulted in

his son's suspension, and calling on the Chancellor he asked for the particulars of the affair. But Dr. Mell refused to utter a word in regard to the matter until the young man was brought, declaring that he must have the privilege of defending himself.

Very soon after he became Chancellor the students were excited to the highest pitch of indignation by the murder of young Walter Roundtree by a negro. It was feared the boys would take the law into their own hands, and a general race riot would ensue, for the negroes were determined to protect the murderer. Dr. Mell quickly took charge of the situation and by his wise and skillful management restrained the young men. The press of the State commended his action in the highest terms.

"Chancellor Mell talked to them, and the boys loved and heeded the advice of this great and good man. Wednesday night, when our town was wild with excitement, not a student could be seen on the streets—they had quietly returned to their rooms, there to await the events of the night." (*Athens Chronicle*.)

"Chancellor Mell has signally demonstrated his capacity and ability to govern young men in the most trying circumstances. In this he has served the State and the cause of the Institution over which he worthily presides." (*Atlanta Constitution*.)

"Chancellor Mell, on the night of the murder, remarked to Mr. Davis, chief of police: 'You need have no fear of trouble from my boys. I have talked to them and they will heed my advice. They will retire to their rooms to-

night, and if their services are needed to preserve the law, they will march to your call as one man—and I will be at their head.’ Happily no call was made on them, and Athens is to-day as quiet and peaceful a city as there is in Georgia.” (*Augusta Chronicle*.)

Dr. Mell had a keen sense of the ludicrous and it was frequently gratified in his dealings with the students, although his patience was equally severely tried at times, as the following experience will testify.

Some time in the year 1886 he was considerably annoyed by the loud and boisterous singing and laughter at the Summey House, (or “Yahoo Hall,” as the students termed this boarding house), just in front of the Chancellor’s residence. A detachment of the Salvation Army had recently come to Athens, and their peculiar way of conducting worship attracted the boys, and as a result there were several mock Salvation Armies among the students, with headquarters at the Summey House. A favorite song of the Army was called “Wake up the dead,” and the college boys, of course, adopted it at once, and when they got together they sang it loud enough to literally wake up the dead, if such a thing were possible. As the regular Army accompanied their songs with the tambourines, drum, horn, shouting, clapping of hands, etc., so the college boys did also, and when it was not convenient to beat tambourines they substituted tin pans and

anything else they could find that would make a noise. One night the Summey House "Salvation Army" were making such an infernal din that Dr. Mell went over to see what was the matter. He found several boys collected around a young fellow who had a piece of sheet iron that had come from the front of some grate, beating it with all his might while the crowd was singing, or rather yelling, "Wake up the dead, wake up the dead, God's going to wake up the dead." As Dr. Mell reached the outskirts of the crowd, the boys stopped singing and slipped away as soon as they saw the Chancellor, except the boy who was beating the iron. He was making such a noise he did not know he had been deserted and that the Chancellor was standing by him. Dr. Mell placed his hand on the shoulder of the young man; the noise ceased and the "musician" became very much embarrassed. The Doctor, however, in a calm and serious manner, said, "My son, are you beating that iron from a sense of duty?" "O, no, Sir," replied the boy. "You have no conscientious scruples against stopping it, have you?" "No, Sir," promptly responded the boy, greatly amazed at the questions asked him by the Chancellor. "Oh, well, then," said the Doctor, "I am so glad to hear you say that, because now I will not feel any delicacy in asking you to stop it, when if you were doing it conscientiously, I should have hesitated." It is

needless to say that the boys ceased to "wake up the dead" after that conversation.

At another time a large crowd of boys were sitting on the chapel steps, during study hours, singing very boisterously, "Nobody knows the trouble I see, the trouble I see," etc., when Dr. Mell stepped in their midst from behind one of the fluted columns and quietly remarked: "Yes, gentlemen, that expresses my feelings exactly, nobody knows the trouble I see when you create these disturbances, and you would confer a great favor on me if you would co-operate with me to stop them." They co-operated.

During the Chancellor's absence in attendance on the exercises of the Branch Colleges some students succeeded in taking out the clapper of the bell and concealing it. When the Chancellor returned he found the college authorities, and students generally, very much embarrassed because of the silence of the bell that had become so necessary in regulating the time of the day and in sounding the recitation periods. The faculty had notified the students that until the clapper was returned no excuse, excepting sickness, would be received for tardiness in attendance upon the lectures. Dr. Mell began at once to put into operation all his resources to ferret out the perpetrators of the deed. He succeeded, after much difficulty, in reaching the belfry and found on the floor several screws, a screw-driver

and a piece of wire, all of which were of peculiar patterns. He then visited the hardware stores in the town to find if such material could be secured at them, but failed to find anything exactly like them. He then visited each of the University Laboratories, with the ostensible purpose of noticing the students' work, and said nothing to the professors concerning the real objects of his visit. While going through one of these laboratories he requested the professor to show him all his facilities for work. In doing this certain drawers were opened, in which the Chancellor detected screws and wires exactly like those he found in the belfry. He asked the professor if the students had free access to these drawers, and being informed that they did, he then wished to know how many boys worked in this laboratory and what were their names. This information was also furnished him. The young men—about twenty—consisted of some of the best students in the University, and none of them had been detected in mischief of any kind. But he was satisfied one or more of these young men could tell him all about the clapper extraction and its location. Several of these boys roomed in what was termed the "Summey House," and by methods that he was enabled to employ, he succeeded in reducing the number to the five or six of the laboratory students rooming in this building; and although he strongly suspected

these boys the question was still a difficult one to bring the proof to a conclusive settlement. Meeting one morning two of these young men he entered into conversation with them, and just as he was about to leave he took them by the hands and said: "Young gentlemen, the Faculty and students have been placed to great inconvenience by the mischievous removal of the bell clapper. The students of good standing, I am sure, are as anxious as the authorities to bring the perpetrators to punishment. Now I have the utmost confidence in you two, and I am sure you will give me your assistance in this matter." As the Chancellor said this he looked the boys steadily in the eyes and his entire manner impressed them that his confidence was not so deeply rooted as his words would imply. They at once became confused and greatly embarrassed, all of which he quietly noted. Next day his attention was attracted by a word let fall by one of the janitors in his presence, and he immediately began asking questions that elicited the information that the clapper was under the mattress in the room of these young men in whom he had expressed such "confidence" the day before. The negro boy had made the discovery while making up the bed. Dr. Mell sent for the boys at once and charged them with taking out the clapper. They commenced to deny the accusation, but Dr. Mell stopped them immediately and said: "I

know the clapper is in your room, under the mattress of your bed. Now I trust you will not force me to institute a search that will be unpleasant both to you and to me. I shall expect the janitor to ring the bell to-morrow morning for prayers, and I am sure you will aid in the accomplishment of this wish of mine. You can place the clapper in the hands of the janitor, or, in your own way, return it to its place in the bell as you found it." It is needless to say that the bell pealed forth its welcome sound next morning as though nothing had ever happened to it. The sound had scarcely died away before there was a shout from the combined throats of students and citizens, testifying to their gratification at the sound.

When Mr. Cleveland was elected the first term, and on the night after the election, when the wires indicated such uncertain sounds as to the results, the students of the University of Georgia concluded to have an immense bonfire to commemorate the election of Mr. Cleveland. All the dry goods boxes in the town, as well as the empty barrels available, were carried to the campus after midnight and a pile was made, huge in proportions. In some way the Chancellor became aware of the intentions of the students, and, in accordance with his usual custom, he was in their midst before they were aware of it. Instead, however, of reprimanding them and

endeavoring to forcibly stop the work of preparation, he quietly informed the boys that he thought the celebration eminently proper, and the cause righteous, and he would help them get the combustible material in shape for the bonfire. "But," he said, "the election is not yet decided, and I know you boys do not desire to celebrate the defeat of the Democratic Party. And yet such an accident would be possible if the brand was applied to the pile, and while it was in flames the telegraph should announce that Mr. Cleveland was defeated." He also informed the crowd of students gathered around the pile of boxes, that the college buildings were in great danger if the fire should be applied in the present situation, and, therefore, he proposed that the boxes be removed to the rear of the grounds, in safe distance from the buildings. The students, now feeling that the Chancellor was in full accord with them and the fire was an assured thing without violation of any regulation, readily agreed with him that the pile of combustible material must be removed to a safe distance, and they immediately began to demolish what they had so carefully erected. But before much of the material came down the Chancellor was prepared with a fresh difficulty. "Now," said he, "we do not wish to sit up all night watching our material in order to prevent any one but ourselves from starting off the fire, so I suggest that we

have all these boxes and barrels safely stored away in a warehouse near by until we are sure Mr. Cleveland has been elected, and I will then furnish all the assistance in my power to make this bonfire a grand success." The argument seemed to be so plausible all were forced to agree, and the boxes were securely stored away in the warehouse. All next day and the following night the telegrams were so uncertain the students lost interest in the contemplated bonfire, and when Mr. Cleveland was at last declared elected the margin was so small there was a tacit consent to give up the bonfire. Moreover, now that the Chancellor was a party to the transaction much of the spiciness had been destroyed, since there was no violation of law, and therefore no risks incurred. Dr. Mell, in referring to this episode, stated that it was always the part of wisdom to head a mob and lead it into channels that would dissipate its dangerous features. A man was foolish to throw himself against a mob determined in its purpose—he would only be crushed and annihilated. He was well aware of the fact that the students had determined to have the bonfire and severe measures would have only stimulated them to other deeds more violent—so he "headed the mob" and no harm resulted.

During the year 1886-87 two of the young men of the University got into a personal difficulty

that arose very naturally and spontaneously from complications and antagonisms among the students themselves. In his report to the Board of Trustees for that year Dr. Mell brought before them the following facts in regard to this unfortunate difficulty. There had been a custom at the University of long standing for the classes in the written examinations to hold all their members to a rigid accountability, and to demand that they in good faith should conform to the pledges they would sign that they had received no aid in preparing the papers. They resolved and announced that they would report to the faculty all that they found cheating. This rendered it necessary that they should as a class investigate and decide upon the cases of those against whom charges were made previously to bringing the accused before the faculty. These inquiries were always and inevitably accompanied by great excitement, and soon lost the feature of a preliminary investigation, and assumed the character of a tribunal of ultimate decision. A tribunal thus organized is well qualified to do great wrong to a timid student accused ignorantly, maliciously, or through rivalry; or cause great commotions and collisions among its own components when it attempts its processes against a brave boy unjustly accused who has friends to rally around him. While a class may be very efficient in the character of a

prosecutor, it is singularly disqualified to discharge the functions of a judge and jury. In the first place, inexperience and their very noble impulses, themselves in opposition to dishonorable conduct, are likely to make them indignant against one tainted by plausible accusation of wrong; and then, in the next place, the ardor and resentment of the prosecution tend to make them unable in an unprejudiced way to see both sides. The consequence has been that in some cases not detected by the Faculty before the catastrophe, very worthy young men have been driven off, or the court itself has been turned into a battle ground where questions have been decided by pugilistic, rather than by forensic disputations.

In the particular case that year, a member of the Sophomore class brought the charge of cheating against five of his classmates. Others joined with him in the testimony in regard to two of them. After some excitement he consented to withdraw the charge against three, admitting that he could not prove them, and gave a written admission to that effect. It happened unfortunately that all the accused, excepting one, were members of the same secret fraternity—the exception being a non-fraternity man—and that the accuser belonged to another club. Suspecting and charging that this was an attempt to smirch the fair name of their club, all the mem-

bers of the fraternity rallied around their fellows thus accused; and this caused antagonistic combinations on the part of some of the other clubs in the University. Soon after the accusation was made, one of the three from whom the charge was ultimately withdrawn, had a stand-up fight with the accuser, with the knowledge and concurrence of parents. It was thought that honor required the other two to challenge their accuser to pugilistic combat also; but as they were small in size and he large and muscular, it was thought right that one of the clubmates, more on terms of physical equality, should champion their cause. All parties acquiesced in this arrangement, and agreed that the duello should be a final settlement all around. Entering heartily into this engagement, forced into it by the prevailing public opinion in the University, encouraged by the undisguised sentiment even among some of the ladies of the town, acting under the approbation of their parents, and umpired by one of the leading merchants of the town, the parties eluded the police, and at a safe place, four miles from town, "punished each other," as the phrase is, "according to the rules of the Marquis of Queensbury"—whatever that may be.

As soon as Chancellor Mell discovered that the class was about to deal with some of its members, he had an interview with it as the members assembled in one of the recitation

rooms, and made an address to them the design of which was to show the dangers that would attend upon their efforts to adjudicate the case. They listened respectfully to him, and finally gave their cordial consent to prosecute the case before the Faculty. A Committee of that body met with the class and, after patient and careful investigation, convicted one of the accused and acquitted the other. It was hoped that this would terminate the excitement; and it did, so far as the class as a body was concerned. But individuals had become exasperated, because, as they said, their honor had been called in question; and others writhed under innuendoes to the effect that their courage had been impugned; and the whole inflammable University community became involved on one side or the other, demanding that the controversy be settled by blows, and aiding all in their power to that end. The matter commenced with the Sophomore Class, but in the final catastrophe there was but a solitary Sophomore engaged. The other champion, and the two seconds were all three Seniors.

He summoned before him the two principals, one at a time, and endeavored to prevent the encounter. But it did not take him long to realize that they were held hopelessly to their championship by the relentless crowd on the campus, in the town and at their homes. He then addressed himself to the effort to induce them to

postpone the fight until the close of the term, reminding them that they were proposing to violate University law, warning them of the danger to themselves personally of University penalties, and appealing to their sense of obligation to the University authorities, who deserved better things at their hands. These considerations received such respectful, and apparently candid, attention that he had hopes of accomplishing his object. The same results were accomplished by a consultation with the seconds. However, they had no sooner left the Chancellor's office than they were caught up and wafted off by the wave of excitement out of doors, and Dr. Mell saw nothing more of them until the folly had expended itself. In a day or two the four young men, engaged in the affray, addressed a written acknowledgement to the Faculty disavowing any intention to treat with contempt constituted authority, and expressing profound regret that they had been betrayed into a violation of University law. This was followed next day by a communication signed by nearly all the students, who acknowledged that they were in large measure responsible for the unfortunate events, and soliciting the clemency of the Faculty in behalf of themselves and their victims.

It may be asked why the Chancellor did not prevent the unfortunate event by having all the parties arrested? In reply to this it may be said

that these four young men were mere straws floating on a mighty tide whose momentum gathered in its force confluent currents issuing from the University, from the town and from exasperated family circles. He had not chains fitted, or strong enough, to bind all these forces; and any summary attempt by him would have only intensified the difficulty, and precipitated disaster as well as disgrace.

These young men were expelled from the University for participating in this fight, and after a certain time they were reinstated in their classes. This leniency on the part of the authorities was very severely criticised by the papers in Georgia, as well as elsewhere, and the Chancellor was given a large share of the blame. In reply to these strictures he published in some of the leading papers the following defense and explanation that fully satisfied the demands of the public and put a quietus on the critics:

“A writer in your paper of the 25th instant correctly says I alone am responsible for the restoration to the University of the would-be duelists. I cheerfully admit my responsibility to the newspapers and to the general public, as well as to the Board of Trustees for the general principles controlling my part in the administration of the University—and preeminently so, for my decision of a question involving the very essence of morality itself. I do not consider it unfortunate that the University is not like the denominational colleges, surrounded by denominational owners who are tempted to resent any newspaper notices that are not favorable—who strive to intimidate

into silence any paper that shows a disposition to criticise. On the contrary, I think it fortunate for the University that the press have, and assert, the right to make daylight shine and the fresh winds of heaven to blow, through it everywhere. True, sometimes, hasty and inaccurate statements may be rushed into print; but even then there is ample compensation if some competent hand gives the correction; for thus the University is kept before the public Of course, on the details of my administration of discipline I ought not to be expected to plead before the public; but I stand ready to justify the great principles on which my system of government is based; and certainly to explain to the newspapers and the public why I restored the would-be duelists The question is asked why were not the would-be duelists punished? The answer is that they were all punished. Their connection with the University was severed, and they were instructed to go home. This action of the University was announced by the press everywhere, and met with universal approbation. The University put its brand of condemnation on the criminal, barbarous and foolish deed which the boys attempted to perpetrate.

But why were they restored to their places in the University? Please let us see what is the extent of meaning of this question. Is it asked on the assumption that those boys had committed the unpardonable sin that must cut them off forever from prosecuting the course of higher education furnished by colleges? Does it imply that it was the duty of all colleges to close their doors against them? I do not suppose that any sensible person would answer this question in the affirmative. If there should be one I beg to be excused from arguing the case with him. If they could ever be restored to the rights and privileges of college students, when, and at what Institution? And could they enjoy this high boon without detriment to morals and to our good name here? For, according to their own laws and the comity existing between these higher Institutions, no University or college could receive these boys without our consent first given.

Whenever and wherever then they may have entered institutions of learning they would have done so at our instance and on our responsibility. In deciding to permit them to return here I have committed no greater outrage—if outrage at all—than could have been justly charged to me if I had consented for them to enter any other institution. I consented for them to return here (1) because they had had a punishment inflicted on them in the presence of the whole world that is reached by newspapers; (2) because most of them were fine students, who received their punishment with the most admirable spirit, justifying it to me in unmistakable terms, and declaring that they were going away with the highest respect and affection for the University whose laws they deeply regretted to have violated; (3) because their parents were, some of them, our alumni, and all of them our friends, who united with their sons in thoroughly acquiescing in the justice of the punishment inflicted; finally, (4) they were permitted to return here because this was the Institution of their choice

But why were they restored at the particular time, and how was the idea of their restoration suggested? Did they or their parents make application to the Faculty or Chancellor? No. The application was made by a large number of Trustees and other distinguished men from various parts of the State If I could feel at liberty to give the names of all these distinguished gentlemen, no one would suspect that the boys were restored because their advocates were disposed to justify or condone the hideous practice of dueling."

The Athens *Banner-Watchman* in an editorial of this date says:

"It is well known that such men as General A. R. Lawton, Col. John Screven, Hon. P. W. Meldrim, Col. J. J. Gresham, Mr. H. W. Grady, and other prominent Georgians and members of the Board of Trustees, wrote strong letters to the Chancellor favoring the recall of the young men suspended."

When the Board of Trustees met at Commencement of 1887, Dr. Mell read his annual report giving a thorough and masterly review of the workings of the University in all its departments. He reviewed the escapade of the "would-be duelists" and defended his action at length. They listened with interest and received his report. Afterwards the Board of Trustees amended the "law with regard to dueling, so that upon conviction, the student who indulges in that pastime shall be expelled, and not allowed to return to college except by a vote of the Board of Trustees. Dr. Mell considered this as censuring his action in restoring the young men, and promptly sent in his resignation as Chancellor. The Board unanimously refused to consider it and sent a committee, composed of Messrs. Gordon, McDaniel and Hammond, to interview the Doctor and find out his reasons for resigning and request him to withdraw his resignation. As soon as it was ascertained why the Doctor had taken such a step a resolution was unanimously passed stating that the Board did not mean in its resolution to censure Dr. Mell, but on the contrary unanimously endorsed his action in the matter. This being satisfactory the resignation was withdrawn."

CHAPTER XXI.

LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.

Immediately after the troubles and vexations of this Commencement, the last one of his life, some of the enemies of the University began violent attacks on the Institution through the religious and secular press, that were calculated to do great damage unless refuted. Chancellor Mell felt these thrusts most keenly, because he recognized how unjust they were and the great harm that would result to his administration. At the solicitations of friends of the University, therefore, he consented to reply to the charges in a series of articles for the papers. He spent almost the entire vacation in writing these articles, when his health demanded recreation and rest. This occurred during the summer months of 1887. These articles were followed by a pamphlet, entitled, "Statements and discussions elicited by attacks and criticisms on the University of Georgia." This work, undertaken at the close of an exhaustive college session, prostrated him, and his physician advised him to leave Athens for a season of rest and quiet. But he declined to leave his post just as the new session was about to open.

He insisted upon attending to all of his duties in spite of his failing strength. In October he was present at the meeting of the Georgia Baptist Association and was chosen Moderator as usual. A notice of this session says:

“The Doctor’s head is almost snowy white, and his cheeks are sunken, but his form is erect, his step firm and elastic, and he still retains that intellectual vigor which has made him a marked figure in the Baptist history of Georgia. No man is more universally loved by his church (denomination) than Dr. Mell.” (*Greensboro Herald.*)

December 12th, 1887, he preached the last sermon of his life, in the Presbyterian Church, on the subject of Election. His text was:

“We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (II. Thess. 2:13,14.)

In the review of the sermon, written by Dr. E. W. Speer, he comments upon the clear and lucid manner with which the preacher, “whose mind had been disciplined by the assiduous study, not only of divinity, but of logic and metaphysics, grappled the problem.” There seemed to be no trace in his mind of the deadly weakness that was attacking his vital forces.

On this same day, December 12th, 1887, little more than one month before he died, Dr. Mell

addressed the following letter to a young minister, the last he ever wrote, except to his family. This young man, after preaching several years most successfully, became tainted with infidel views and strayed off into darkest error. He gave up the ministry and, at his own request, was dropped from the roll of the church of which he was a member. After plunging several years in this black darkness of doubt, the Holy Spirit rescued him and brought him back to a full realization of his situation and to repentance for his great sin. He concluded to apply to the church for readmission to membership and reordination to the ministry. Before taking this step, however, he communicated with Dr. Mell and the following letter was the response:

"Yours of the 10th instant has given me exquisite pleasure. I have been long expecting it. I had an abiding faith that the Lord would bring you back. I hope you will as promptly as you can take steps to secure your restoration to the church.

Ordination is the joint action of the church and the Presbytery; consequently, if by any means, or for any cause, one loses the right to preach, it would seem that the intervention of the Presbytery would be necessary to restore to him, in full, the ministerial functions. Exclusion from the church carried with it of necessity all rights and privileges pertaining to one as a Baptist minister. I do not mean to be understood as saying that a Presbytery must use again all the detailed forms employed in the original ordination; but merely that they should make such investigation as to be authorized to reinstate and welcome back into the ministry the one

deposed. This is preeminently necessary for the deposed one himself; because the endorsement of an able body of ministers would reinstate him into the confidence of the people at once.

The course you propose is eminently wise. I would not permit the authorities to restore my ministerial functions at once. This will not be to consent to keep your mouth closed. Every male member of a Baptist (or gospel) church has a right, and is in duty bound, to tell all he knows of Christ. If, after a modest reserve on your part for a time, the people demand that you reassume the functions of a minister, you can enter upon the work again with all the more confidence, comfort and hope. But by no means consent to it until after a similar advice and consent by a Presbytery of ministers in the vicinity, invited by the church for that purpose. If you consent to anything short of this, you will not only violate gospel principle, but you would commit a huge blunder as against yourself; for you would need the endorsement of such a body to secure at once the confidence of the people. It is greatly in your favor though that your exclusion was demanded by yourself, and that it was based on no charge, or confession, of immoral conduct.

My dear Brother, please let me adapt to you the language of the Savior addressed to Peter, now that you are 'converted, strengthen your brethren.' God bless you, and keep you, and make you eminently useful.

Yours fraternally,

P. H. MELL."

On the 15th of December, 1887, he was compelled to recognize the fast failing of his strength, and he laid aside his duties to spend two or three weeks in search of rest in the southern part of Georgia. On this day, in a letter to the writer, and just before leaving home, he wrote as follows:

"My health is bad. I have broken myself down by overwork. My doctor orders me off for the recess. Many of the Trustees urge me to take a month's rest; but I cannot do so, my colleagues are already overworked, and my classes would suffer. There is no rest for me but in the grave."

After remaining in southern Georgia for a week or more, and not recovering as rapidly as he desired, he concluded to return home. On his way back he visited the writer at Auburn, Alabama, with the hope that the change would be beneficial. He reached Auburn on January the 5th, very much exhausted, and was confined to his room most of the time thereafter. Each day becoming weaker, he felt the end was not far off, and he longed to reach his home before dying. At his earnest solicitation, therefore, the writer, on the 15th of January, carried him to Athens. It was necessary to support him almost bodily, although he was able to walk a little. Throughout the entire fatiguing journey he exhibited a remarkable fortitude, patience and strength of character. Very few complaints escaped his lips, and yet, from the conversations held with him before and during the journey he was undoubtedly anticipating the near approach of the end; and his bodily sufferings must have been very great. Every attention was shown him by the railroad officials to make his journey as little fatiguing as possible. He reclined on his berth from Auburn to Atlanta, but refused to

use the berth on the Georgia train for fear of displaying too much weakness among his friends and acquaintances, and persisted in sitting up all the way to Athens. This tax upon his little remaining strength so thoroughly exhausted him, that it was necessary, when Athens was reached, for his sons to take him up in their arms and carry him to the carriage, and then from the carriage to his bed, from which he never rose. He lingered until the 26th of January, at times rallying, and then growing worse, when he breathed his last. He retained his faculties with remarkable keenness until within a very short time of his death, and died with perfect resignation—willing to go because his Master had summoned him to come up higher.

His faith and confidence in the righteous cause, in which he had spent his life, were unshaken to the last. Three days before his death he said: "I have been a wonderful child of Providence, if not a child of grace." On this same day the Treasurer of the University sent him a check for his quarter's salary, and the messenger was instructed to say that, if Dr. Mell was unable to sign the receipt, his son's signature would suffice. But the response came promptly: "No, let me do it, Major Cobb is a punctilious man." He was lifted up because he was so weak he could not hold up his head. His daughter placed the pen in his hand and guided it to the

paper, because his arm was almost paralyzed. His signature on the receipt was made almost as distinctly as ever.

Just after he reached home from Auburn he said to Doctor Pope, his physician, "I am in the hands of a wise God and a skillful physician." He said repeatedly during the last few days of his illness, "For me to live is Christ's, to die is gain. God is good and gracious and merciful—merciful to sinners." When his daughter told him good night, on the Sunday night before his death, he said: "Kiss me, and God grant you a good night's rest." She responded: "I hope you will also have a comfortable night's rest." And he replied: "God knows, I will scuffle through the best I can." He was lifted up on Tuesday morning to take his usual nourishment, and he said: "I have lost my dignity; I am a perfect infant in my children's hands." When he was given whisky to stimulate him, he said once: "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish." On Tuesday night he said: "The crisis has come," although nothing had been said to him, or in his hearing, that would lead him to think his friends were apprehensive. "My life hangs in the balance. Nurse me well to-night, and maybe I will get through safely. If you and the Doctor will do your parts I will do mine. Give me the nourishment, and, if I do not understand, force it on me. But God's will be done."

During the night he said: "I think we shall pull through—I believe we are winning the fight." The first time he confidently admitted he was better was on Wednesday morning; but the Doctor found his pulse very weak, and he had lost strength during the night. He endeavored to say something to his wife on Wednesday afternoon, but congestion of the lungs had taken place and he could scarcely speak; he therefore uttered: "I am too weak, it will die with me." At intervals after this he said: "I commit my soul to God in Christ Jesus—Glory be to God." "Once I was dead, but now am alive. In the other world I am thoroughly understood and thoroughly appreciated—thoroughly understood and thoroughly appreciated." He uttered these words just as written—repeating the last part of the sentence. It seemed to those who watched that he was permitted to penetrate the veil which hangs between this and the other world, and that he actually beheld the understanding and approving smile on his beloved Master's face.

Just before breathing his last he said: "Nearly home?" and made an effort to say something more, but failed. He then tried to fold his hands across his breast and died without a struggle—fell asleep in the arms of Jesus, for whom he had fought a valiant fight, and at the end of the many long years of a useful life was taken to his reward.

CHAPTER XXII.

MEMORIALS.

The numerous friends of Chancellor Mell throughout the South paid tender and beautiful tributes to his memory as soon as the news of his death became known. The funeral exercises, the articles and editorials in the religious and secular press, and the sympathetic letters addressed to the bereaved family, all gave striking evidence of the high esteem of his friends and the estimate placed on his work as an educator and minister by numerous acquaintances and admirers throughout the entire South.

In this chapter, a few of these testimonials are given, to indicate how deeply his loss was regretted by the public generally, and how highly his life work was appreciated.

"To-day was a sad one for Athens. Everybody and everything seemed to realize the loss which the death of our beloved[†] Chancellor has occasioned.

Mayor Hodgson ordered that the public schools be suspended, and the Lucy Cobb and Home School also suspended their exercises through respect to their deceased friend. The two literary societies met at 2:30 o'clock and marched in procession to the Chancellor's residence and thence back to the college chapel. Following the procession of students came the hearse, immediately followed by the members of the faculty and the trustees; then came the family and the friends of the deceased.

The corpse arrived at the chapel, in which the funeral services were held, at 3 o'clock. The chapel was draped throughout. The coffin was placed at the foot of the rostrum, and just above it on the rostrum were three pillows of flowers, the first one with a green back ground, with the initials, P. H. M. in blue violets; the second with a white back ground of flowers, with S. A. E. in blue violets, and the third with a white background with the word "Rest" in blue violets. Just behind these pillows was a beautiful design, representing the "Gates Ajar." Upon the coffin were beds of lovely flowers, and in them a pure white dove, all very expressive.

After those present were seated, the choir sang, "Come ye disconsolate," after which Dr. Lipscomb read from the 12th chapter of Corinthians, beginning at the 21st verse. Then Mr. Davis, rector of the Episcopal Church, gave out the hymn, 'It is well with my soul,' which was sung by the choir. Prayer was offered by Dr. Lane, pastor of the Presbyterian Church, and after the prayer Dr. C. D. Campbell, pastor of the Baptist Church, took the text, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant,' and preached an eloquent sermon, giving a short description of Dr. Mell's life. The discourse on his mental and moral qualities, representing the greatness and goodness of our Chancellor, was in a manner satisfactory to all. When he had finished, Rev. Mr. Anderson, pastor of the First Methodist Church, gave out the hymn, 'Shall we meet beyond the river?' which was sung by the choir as the crowd passed out.

The crowd was an immense one; the chapel was jammed and many had to stand outside. The remains were then taken to the cemetery, the procession marching to the order stated above. In the quiet burial ground which overlooks the waters of the Oconee river, our loved one was laid to rest. His life is finished, but the fruits of his labors will live forever.

As the remains left the chapel, the chapel bell began to toll, which was followed by the bells of every church in the city. At Antioch, a little town on the Georgia

railroad, where Dr. Mell had preached for many years, the church was draped in mourning, and though twenty miles away, communication was made by telegraph, and at the same minute the bells began to toll in the city the church bell there rang out the same solemn peal." (*Macon Telegraph.*)

The alumni of the University of Georgia, residing in Atlanta, held a meeting at the office of the *Constitution*, and after passing suitable resolutions a committee was appointed to attend the funeral obsequies.

Memorial services were held in Baptist churches in many places throughout the South, and touching and beautiful addresses were made.

At the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, in 1888, memorial services were held in honor of P. H. Mell, the late president, and speeches were delivered by distinguished ministers of the denomination in commemoration of the virtues of the man whose death they mourned.

The following resolutions were passed by the Convention:

"*Resolved 1st*, That the Convention has heard with profound regret the announcement of the death of Brother P. H. Mell, for so many years our beloved and honored President . . . ; but that we are, nevertheless, cheered by the abiding conviction that God still lives and rules, and will lead his people to ultimate victory.

Resolved 2nd, That the Secretaries be instructed to prepare a memorial page in our minutes, on which shall be inscribed the full name of this faithful servant of God, with the dates and places of his birth and death."

In the report of the Foreign Mission Board, made to the Southern Baptist Convention at its session in Richmond, Virginia, in 1888, the following beautiful tribute is made to his memory:

“IN MEMORIAM.

“PARTICK HUES MELL, D.D., LL.D.

“Born July 19th, 1814; Died January 26th, 1888.

“The late President of the Southern Baptist Convention will be long remembered. His erect figure, angular features, keen eye, concise speech, his incisive thoughts, cogent logic, unyielding orthodoxy, commanding address, all represented a type of manhood which impresses indelibly even as steel makes cuts into granite not to be worn away by the waves of time.

“The strength of his influences as a presiding officer was only surpassed by their variety and range. In the Chair of the Convention sat an educator and author whose teachings had influenced the mind and heart of many pupils and more readers; a soldier who had touched men whose elbows communicated the contact through armies; a man versed in human nature, whose words and acts were perhaps more thought of and more talked of than those of any Baptist of the United States; a preacher whose control of churches and congregations was so complete that the territory in which he preached was called ‘Mell’s Kingdom;’ a ‘master of assemblies’ who presided twenty-nine years over his District Association, twenty-five years over his State Convention, and fifteen years over the Southern Baptist Convention; who, as the ‘prince of parliamentarians,’ had been gazed upon by hundreds of thousands of admiring eyes and had won for himself more than national reputation, and who, as ‘President Mell,’ was looked up to by missionaries and mission churches all over our Sunny South and in the Queen of the Antilles, as well as in pictorial Mexico, tropical Brazil. equatorial

Africa, classical Italy and antipodal China, as the worthy head of a body executive of the sublime and divine commission for the world's evangelization.

"In these far-reaching influences was illustrated the principle that great rule is the reward of great service. Of the Southern Baptist Convention Dr. Mell was a friend whose faith in its necessity and destiny never wavered from its inception; a member whose interest in all departments of its works was sympathetic, profound and untiring, and a presiding officer who, by patience and pains-taking, coupled with native quickness, sagacity, caution and courtesy, so handled the movements of the body as to give to delegates general satisfaction, to kindle popular enthusiasm, and to secure for the Convention itself the encomium of being a model for religious, deliberative and representative bodies in our country, and, indeed, in the Christianized world; therefore

"1. *Be it resolved*, That praise is due to Him who is the source and sustainer of life for the many days on earth which by the gifts of nature and the graces of the spirit this man of God used with a success far above the average success of his fellows for the advance of civilization, the establishment of denominational principles, and the progress of the Redeemer's Kingdom in the world.

"2. *Be it resolved*, That in the grief at our great loss, more poignantly realized by the family of the deceased, felt also by his wide circle of devoted friends and the vast constituency of the Southern Baptist Convention, is comfort in the reflection that there is sincere condolence, by appreciative minds and sympathetic hearts, in every continent of our planet on which rests the lights and shadows of day and night.

"3. *Be it resolved*, That the man who so honored his race and his brethren should be duly honored by them; that the Southern Baptist Convention, representing not only its Caucasian patrons and laborers of North and South Americas, but a host of valiant men and noble women—missionaries and mission churches—identified with or belonging to Mongolian and African races, is the

proper exponent of such world-wide honoring; and that it be recommended by this Board that an appropriate part of the forthcoming session of the Convention be set apart for the voicing of this universal sentiment in services memorial and funeral by large-hearted men, brother ministers and consecrated missionaries.

"4. *Be it resolved*, That a page in the record book of this Board be appropriately inscribed to the memory of the deceased; that fitting mention be made of him in our report to the Convention; and that a copy of this paper, duly authenticated by the Recording Secretary, be sent to the widow and children of our departed friend and brother, the late Chancellor of the University of Georgia, and the incomparable President of the Southern Baptist Convention."

TWO STRIKING FIGURES.

[CLIPPING FROM A GEORGIA PAPER.]

When Hon. Jefferson Davis visited Macon last fall the city of Athens sent a delegation to invite him to North-east Georgia. At the head of that delegation was Dr. P. H. Mell. The venerable Chancellor of the University found the ex-President lying upon a couch, too feeble to rise, but the two men who had so often heard of each other, had a long and delightful interview. Standing at the foot of Mr. Davis' bed, the great scholar and divine appeared erect, lithe and full of purpose, while the prostrate chieftain, but little his senior, seemed barely able to stand the trip back to his Mississippi home. Dr. Mell had paid Mr. Davis the compliment of bearing to him an invitation to visit the home of Howell Cobb and the halls of the University of Georgia. The embodiment of public spirit and enthusiasm, the Chancellor, although himself an old man, had responded to the request of his people and marched with the alacrity of a boy in the ranks of Confederate veterans to the great warrior and statesman.

But his sudden illness and death reminds us that the elastic frame and buoyant step were nearer the end than

the feeble President whom he tenderly addressed, and whom he besought with all the solicitude of a younger soldier, to consider his own comfort, and in no way to imperil his life. Both men were old-time heroes. The same strong will and unfailing courage and unfaltering integrity were the traits of each. Those who knew Dr. Mell do not doubt that he would have served a cause with as much fidelity and worn the shackles with as much patience. His life had worn away in more peaceful pursuits, but in every sense of moral and physical courage, of devotion to duty and granitic determination he was a hero and a chieftain.

One of these striking figures has gone to rest under the shade trees of the Oconee, and the other waits by the beautiful waters of Beauvoir, patiently and bravely.

On the silent shore
Of that vast ocean he must sail so soon.

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